BONUS CD-ROM

SPECIAL 25TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S EDITION

DRAGON

DRAGONS
HOW TO SLAY A DRAGON AND LIVE TO SPEND THE HOARD

DRACONIAN TACTICS
DEFEATING THE DRAGONSLAYERS

TONGUES OF FIRE
LEARN TO SPEAK DRACONIC

5 DRAGON STEEDS
RETURN OF THE GREATER DRAKES

5 MAGIC ITEMS
FOR DRAGON HUNTERS

SO YOU ROLLED A 3...
MAKING THE BEST OF YOUR WORST STATS

ISSUE 284
$5.99US $8.50CAN
06>
JUNE 2001
0 71658 01823 5

5 NEW REGULAR FEATURES!

ELMINSTER'S GUIDE TO THE REALMS | CITIES FOR THE AGES | FAITHS OF FAERÛN | THE DM'S TOOLBOX | SCOTT KURTZ'S PVP

Continue your quest...

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info.

REQUIRED Windows 95/98 REQUIRED

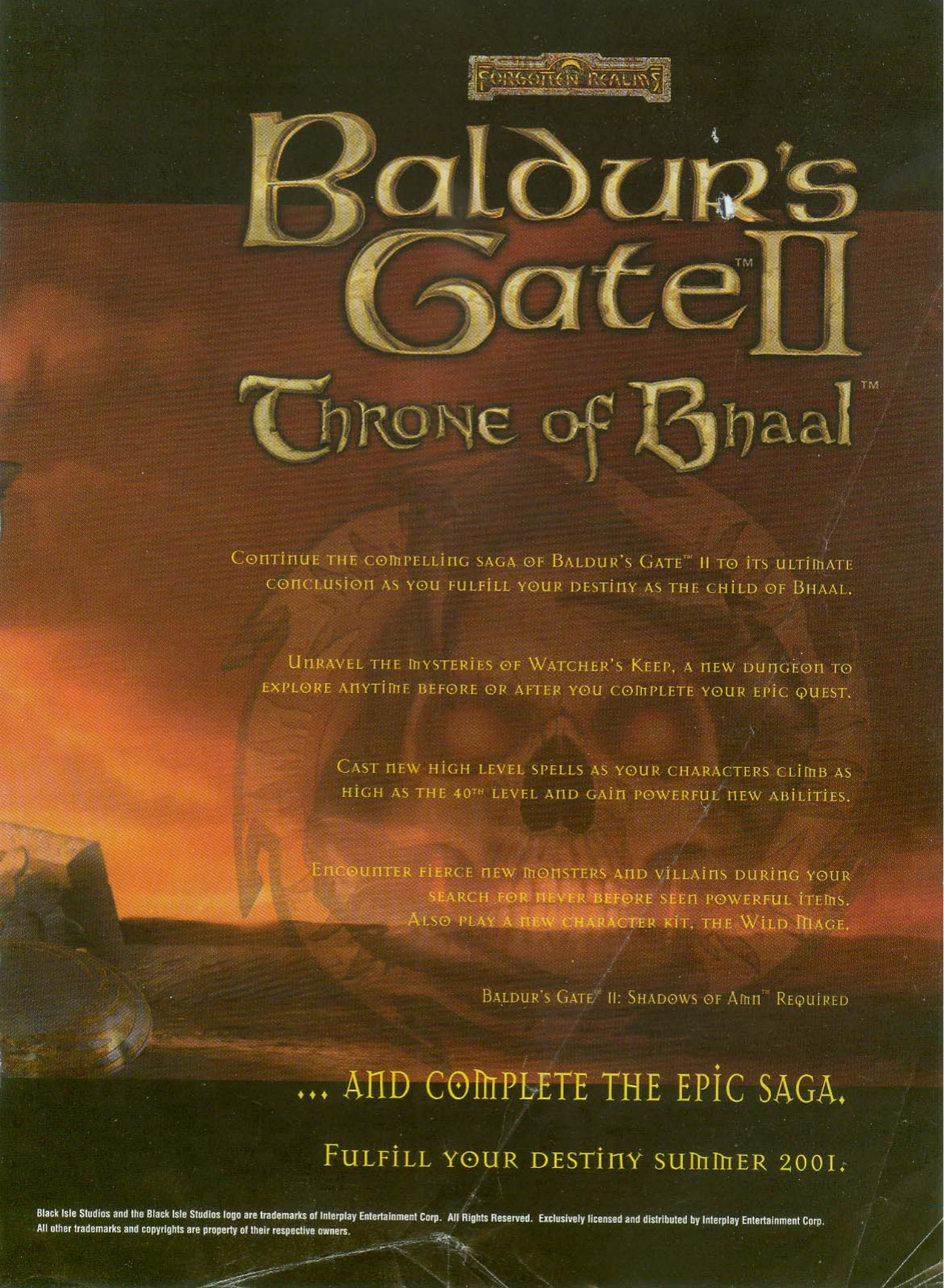
Developed By: BioWare Corp

BLACK ISLE studios™

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

OFFICIAL LICENSED PRODUCT

BALDUR'S GATE II: THRONE OF BHAAL: Developed and © 2000, 2001 BioWare Corp. All Rights Reserved. Baldur's Gate, Throne of Bhaal, Shadows of Amn, Forgotten Realms, the Forgotten Realms logo, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, the AD&D logo, and the Wizards of the Coast logo are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used by Interplay under license. All Rights Reserved. BioWare, the BioWare Infinity Engine and the BioWare logo are trademarks of BioWare Corp. All Rights Reserved.


FORGOTTEN REALMS
Baldur's Gate™ II
Throne of Bhaal™
Continue the compelling saga of Baldur's Gate™ II to its ultimate conclusion as you fulfill your destiny as the child of Bhaal.
Unravel the mysteries of Watcher's Keep, a new dungeon to explore anytime before or after you complete your epic quest.
Cast new high level spells as your characters climb as high as the 40th level and gain powerful new abilities.
Encounter fierce new monsters and villains during your search for never before seen powerful items. Also play a new character kit, the Wild Mage.
Baldur's Gate™ II: Shadows of Amn™ Required
... and complete the epic saga.
Fulfill your destiny summer 2001.
Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo are trademarks of Interplay Entertainment Corp. All Rights Reserved. Exclusively licensed and distributed by Interplay Entertainment Corp. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

If anyone knows how to paint dragons, it's Todd Lockwood. Here are the steps he took to create this month's DRAGON *cover.*

Todd draws up a bunch of sketches to explore compositions and resolve any anatomical challenges.

Once a final composition is decided upon, he draws a full-size version on vellum.

At the local copy shop, the drawing is copied onto heavy illustration paper.

After mounting the sheet onto masonite, Todd paints from the background forward. He keeps useful resources, like a visual reference for the birds, nearby.

Dragon Issue 284 • June 2001
Volume XXVI, Number 1

GAME ROOM

What's new, what's happening, and what's on your mind.

Wyrm's Turn 6
Scale Mail 8
Profiles: Phil Foglio 14
Previews 16
Convention Calendar 20
Countdown 22
Up On A Soapbox 24

FEATURES

New rules, campaigns, and idea generators.

Scale and Claw 28
Stephen Kenson
Draconian Tactics 34
Jesse Decker
Dragontongue 38
Owen K. C. Stephens
Run For Your Lives 40
Adam Kay
Taste Test 42
Robin D. Laws
Wise as an Ox, Strong as an Owl 48
Brian Rogers
Pilgrim's Test 52
Thomas Harlan
Tavern Activities 97
Dawn Ibach

FAMILIARS

Humor, puzzles, monsters, magic, and more.

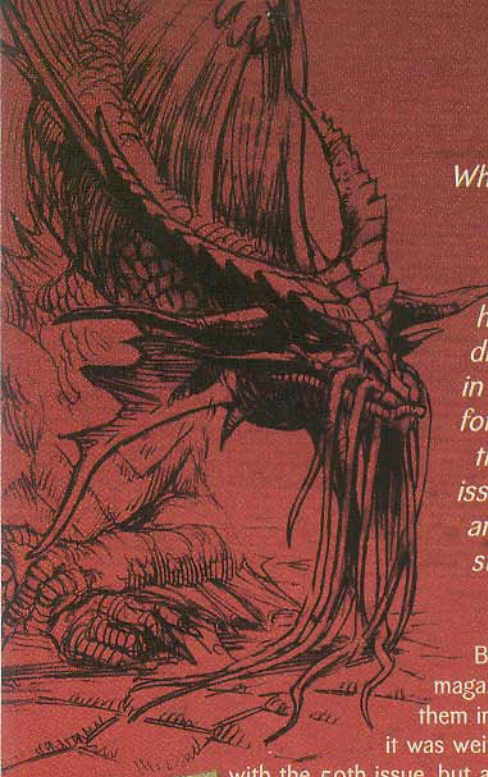
Dork Tower 26
Mind Flayers 62
Campaign Corner 64
Class Acts: The Lightbearer 68
Faiths of Faerûn: Magistrati & Watchers 70
Elminster's Guide: Mrelgaunt's Turret 74
Cities for the Ages: London 78
Giants in the Earth: Strangers in Bethlehem 84
Bestiary: Greater Drakes 92
Bazaar of the Bizarre: Hoard of the Howling Wyrm 98
Vs: Dragons 102
Nodwick 104
Dragonmirth 128
What's New 130

WIZARD'S WORKSHOP

Tools, tricks, and tactics to improve your game.

Forum 106
PC Portraits 110
Role Models 112
The Play's the Thing 114
DM's Toolbox 116
Sage Advice 118
Silicon Sorcery 122
Dungeoncraft 124

SILVER AGE



When The DRAGON *#1 hit hobby shops in 1976, most of us had never heard of the D&D game. Those who had probably thought it was some kind of hippy weirdo fad that would fade with disco. The hobby had not yet exploded in popularity, but the contributors' love for the game is evident in all of the 32 pages of that premiere issue. Tim Kask was the editor, and Dave Sutherland was the staff artist—and that was the* entire *magazine staff.*

By the time issue #50 hit the stands, the magazine had blossomed to 80 pages, a few of them in color. Editor-in-chief Kim Mohan noted that it was weird but cool that the 5th Anniversary came with the 50th issue, but a shift from a bimonthly schedule to 10-times-a-year and then one skipped month combined to create the happy coincidence. That wouldn't be the last time the magazine skipped a month (or seven).

Kim was still at the helm for the 10th Anniversary in 1986. Most of the content of issue #110 was dedicated to D&D, with a special section on dragons, helping to formalize the June issue's regular theme, but it also included articles for four other games. The D&D boom had just passed, and Kim noted that the hobby seemed to have reached a plateau, with as many people joining as were drifting away. *DRAGON* was still a viable magazine, but its growth had slowed with that of the hobby.

In 1991, the inimitable Roger Moore was the editor. In issue #170 Roger reminded readers that your input determines what we change about the magazine. As the conflicting survey results indicated even then (equal responses for "More articles on TSR's game worlds" and "Fewer articles on TSR's game worlds," for instance), there's no pleasing all of the people all of the time. That's why in recent years we've shot for pleasing most of the people most of the time. Fortunately, concentrating on D&D players makes that possible, and we plan to keep at it.

Our 20th Anniversary came at the best of times and the worst of times. It was good for me, since issue #230 was really my first as editor, but 1996 wasn't kind to TSR, as Associate Publisher Brian Thomsen noted in his editorial. It was becoming clear even to those of us who didn't wear a tie to work—mostly because those who did wear ties slashed our budgets on a weekly basis—that the company was in dire straits. Fortunately, that was also the year that Wizards of the Coast came to the rescue.

Since then, we've enjoyed better resources (note the spiffy color) and a renewed sense of purpose (all D&D, all the time). The launch of the new edition last year didn't hurt, either, and we've been blessed with both talented contributors and an active readership eager to guide us. The result: Our subscription base has doubled, and DRAGON is sold in more places than ever, giving us plenty of reason to celebrate on this, our silver anniversary. A quarter century is an awfully long time for a fad to thrive, so something tells us we're here to stay.

Dave Gross • Editor-in-Chief

DRAGON

GROUP PUBLISHER
Johnny Wilson
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Dave Gross
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Chris Thomasson
ASSISTANT EDITOR
Matthew Sernett
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Phil Foglio, Ed Greenwood, John Kovalic, Robin D. Laws, Christopher Perkins, Mike Selinker, Skip Williams, Aaron Williams, Ray Winninger
ART DIRECTOR
Peter Whitley
DESIGN
Matthew Stevens
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Pierce Watters
ADVERTISING SALES DIRECTOR
Bob Henning
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
John Dunn
CIRCULATION ASSISTANT
Dawnelle Miesner

DRAGON Magazine (ISSN# 0279-6848) is published monthly for $34.95 per year by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., 1801 Lind Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98055, United States of America. Periodicals Postage Paid at Renton, WA, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO DRAGON Magazine, P.O. BOX 469107, ESCONDIDO, CA 92046.

©2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written permission of the publisher. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., its employees, or its editorial staff, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. WIZARDS OF THE COAST; TSR; DUNGEONS & DRAGONS; ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS; D&D; AD&D; FORGOTTEN REALMS; DRAGONLANCE; PLANESCAPE; RAVENLOFT; BIRTHRIGHT; MYSTARA; SPELLFIRE; GREYHAWK; DARK SUN; SPELLJAMMER; AL-QADIM; COUNCIL OF WYRMS; MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH; MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM; ALTERNITY; STAR*DRIVE; DARK•MATTER; ALIEN COMPENDIUM; FIFTH AGE; DUNGEON MASTER; PLAYER'S OPTION; DRAGON; DUNGEON; POLYHEDRON; LIVING CITY; LIVING GREYHAWK; GEN CON; RPGA are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Star Wars is a registered trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd. ©1999 Lucasfilm Ltd. All rights reserved.

™©1995, 1996, and 1998 Nintendo, Creatures, GAMEFREAK. Pokémon, Jungle, Fossil, Gym Heroes, Team Rocket, Game Boy, Gotta catch 'em all, and the official Nintendo Seal are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2000 Nintendo of America.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Contact Publishers Creative Systems at Dragon@pcspublink.com or call 1-800-395-7760. In the UK, contact kay.palmer@tnsofres.com or call +44-18-58-41-4713.

ADVERTISING: Contact *DRAGON Magazine's* Advertising Sales Director, Bob Henning, at 425-204-7262. All ads are subject to approval by Wizards of the Coast, which reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree not to hold Wizards of the Coast liable for any loss or expense from alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements.

Northeastern Advertising Representatives: Sig or Scott Buchmayr, Buchmayr Associates, 137 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853, (203) 855-8834.

Distribution Nationally and Internationally by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: 201-634-7400. Fax: 201-634-7499

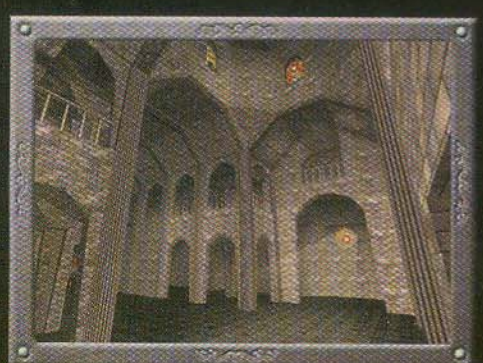
Printed in the U.S.A.

Rubies of Eventide

"The strands of fate are held in mortal hands. Only they can rise above the demands of destiny." ~ Praxus

* Unique Combat System
* Seven Races, Sixteen Classes
* Immersive History and Culture
* Dozens of Skills, Hundreds of Spells
* Roleplaying is Encouraged and Rewarded
* Open Skill System Allows Unique Characters

1 - 800 - playcwi
www.rubiesofeventide.com



SCALE MAIL

Thumbs Up

Greetings to the staff at *Dragon*. I would like to give you a thumbs up on your great work.

First, the good things: I really like the new "The Play's the Thing," as it really gives nice ideas that encourage roleplaying. I also loved the elves and dwarves issues, and I can do nothing but wonder whether the gnomes and halflings will be covered as well. These usually underrated character races could be made more interesting by giving players more background information about them.

I also have some minor complaints. For the "Bestiary" articles, I regret to say that I have ceased reading them. The creatures are so completely outlandish that no one looking at them could help but laugh; their use in games is very small. I have similar concerns with the latest "New Adventures of Volo." The "Lost Treasures of Cormyr" series hardly adds anything to the Forgotten Realms, and have hardly any real use. The earlier "New Adventures of Volo" detailing specific locations in Faerûn or current events were far more useful and I hope to see more of this kind of articles in the future.

Rob Vermeulen
Gouda, The Netherlands

Never fear, we won't give gnomes and halflings short shrift. Our next issue features a couple of nifty resources for halflings, including proof that they make some of the best wizards. Gnome fans must wait a little longer, but their issue comes early next year.

We hope this issue's installment of "Elminster's Guide the Realms" strikes your fancy, Rob. Ed promises a new part of Faerûn each month.

Short and Sweet

Now *that's* the type of *Dragon* magazine I love! Peter Whitley finally got the cover right too! Excellent content and very funny! Good work! Reminds me of some of the classic April Fool's issues from the early '80s.

David Richards
Springfield, Missouri

Thanks for the letter! We're glad you liked the issue! We hope you like this one, too! Now on to some more responses to the April issue!

Half-Assed Cover

I saw the April issue on the newsstand today and became completely enraged. For some reason I couldn't begin to fathom, somebody had cut off half of the Phil Foglio cover I'd been anticipating in favor of a unprecedented black border down the left side.

I bought the thing, wrestled it out of that blasted baggie, and turned to the full art spread. Then I fathomed all right. We Foglio fans tend to forget how, uh, vivid the man's art can be. The thong shot reminded me quick. It also reminded me of all the debate a few issues ago about gratuitous naked women in D&D illustrations. You kids must have had a hell of a meeting after the art was unveiled. I don't envy you.

Nonetheless, I think you made the wrong call on this one. For one thing, I think the full art would not have looked out of place on the magazine rack, considering all the space those racks give to *Maxim* and the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. (Not much of a defense, considering those magazines' attitudes toward women.) The baggie *Dragon* came in could have, er, "blotted out the moon" effectively without mangling the

share off your opinion

MAIL "SCALE MAIL"
Dragon Magazine
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.
Renton, WA 98055, USA

EMAIL SCALEMAIL@WIZARDS.COM
Include your full name and mailing address if you expect your letter to be printed, and let us know how much of that address you'd like printed. (We'll assume city and state, otherwise.)

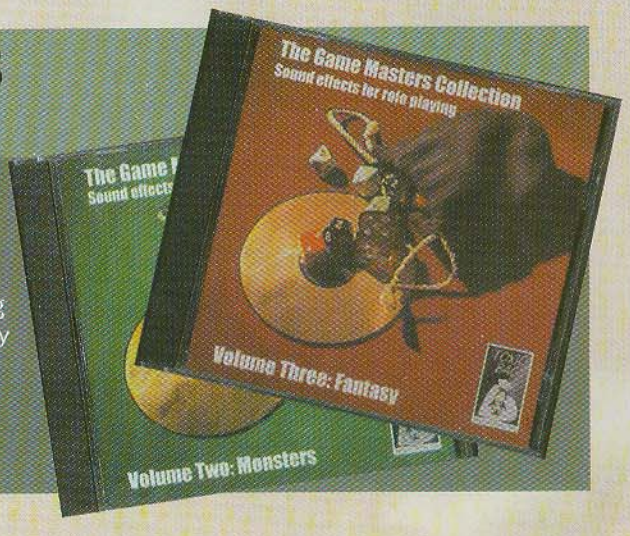
for subscription inquiries

EMAIL DRAGON@PCSPUBLINK.COM
CALL 1 (800) 395-7760

Random Encounters

useful resources for every D&D player.

Are you one of those DMs who can mimic a fabulous array of voices and make convincing sound effects during the game? Me, neither. For those of us with a limited vocal range, Toxic Bag Productions has come to the rescue with a series of sound effects for your roleplaying campaign. The Game Masters Collection ranges from 20th-century city sounds to science fiction computer and blaster effects, but the most useful for D&D players are their Volumes 2 and 3: Monsters and Fantasy. Go to www.toxicbag.com.



© 2001 Nexon Inc. All Rights Reserved. Nexus and Dark Ages are trademarks of Nexon Inc. Developed by Nexon Inc.

DM of the Month: Steve Osmond

I'd like to nominate Steve Osmond as DM of the Month. Since April 1998, Steve has run his own campaign world, Myr.

The most amazing thing in Steve's campaign is the way events tie into one another. For example, we decided that we would convert to 3rd Edition about a year prior to its release. About that time, a comet appeared in the sky of Myr, very faint at first. We had also been tracking a prophecy for quite some time, and part of it said, "The Fist of God will smite the Silent Sister." We did quite a lot during that year, going this place and that. Always the comet got brighter, and then it split in two, which was a foreboding thing according to the astrologers. Finally, on the night we converted to 3rd Edition, the comet struck an invisible moon known as the Silent Sister, the focus of magic on Myr. The changes brought about as the surges of magic flowed through the world effected our changes to 3rd Edition, along with other pieces of the prophecy. Steve planned how he would incorporate the 3rd Edition rules into the ongoing campaign for over a year in advance.

Wayne Woodman
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

cover's visual joke for those of us who bought it. Heck, even a judicious dose of large type could have handled the worst of the problem. One big "April Fools!" and presto: no angry letters!

Easy for me to say. But keep it in mind for next time. Fogilo's painting was, for all its problems, a terrific piece of art. You cut it in half and slapped the half you approved of on your cover. Such things shouldn't be done lightly.

That said, I wouldn't even have seen the intended work if not for your practice of printing your covers in their full glory next to the contents page. However you might have felt about it, you let me judge it for myself and I thank you for that. You are class acts, every one of you, which is probably why I'm so hard on you.

Jesse L. Morgan
Las Cruces, NM

April Reviews

First off, as the founder of the Yahoo! Phil Foglio Fan Club—**http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/philndixie**—let me just say that it was great to see more of Phil's work in the magazine this month.

I own the 2nd-Edition FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, but I've never really gotten into it. Your "Countdown" articles are changing that. The "Magic of Faerûn" piece was interesting indeed, and if I have enough spare cash in my gaming budget come June, I'll have to grab the FORGOTTEN REALMS sourcebook.

The "Guide to Gaming Etiquette" was intensely entertaining. I think I dislocated something while chuckling over that piece, so please advise Mr. Vogel that if I don't see more of his work in your pages in the near future, I'll be forced to send him my medical bills.

"Bard on the Run" was mildly amusing, but my experience was soured by your inclusion of a Britney Spears spoof—in particular, a parody of "Oops! I Did It Again." I have, in the past, had my emotions toyed with—something I'm sure at least some of my fellow gaming geeks can relate to—and I find the attitude put forth in said song deeply offensive. The parody itself was amusing, but the fact that it was a parody of a song I hate with every ounce of my being ruined the article for me.

"Possessions" was fabulous. We don't see enough of Elaine Cunningham in your pages. I'd also like to see another of Ben Bova's Orion stories, while we're on the topic of fiction.

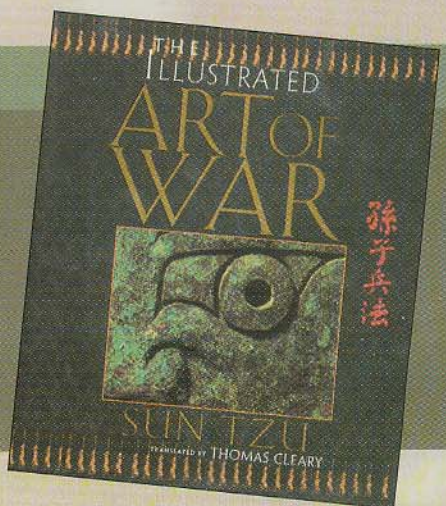
"The New Adventures of Volo" was okay. I haven't found recent articles that interesting—I wasn't particularly intrigued by the various Comyrean treasures, and I've never particularly liked Sembia. I'd prefer to see more explorations of various dungeons and such throughout the Realms, and more on assorted myths and legends. By the way, could you get Ron Spencer's work into a broader part of your magazine? He's one of my favorite artists.

Now for the central issue: For the first time to my recollection, Mike Selinker's solution to the previous issue's "Mind Flayers" puzzle was *wrong*. Here's why:

According to the solution, Barathor is lawful good and Codexun is chaotic evil. That's what I got. *However*, the solution also states that Aznimul is chaotic good! If that's true, Aznimul can lie only once, but in the puzzle published in issue #281, he lies twice. (He claims he's lawful good—strike one—and that Barathor is evil—strike two.) That means if the existing info is correct (Barathor is LG, Codexun is CE), Aznimul is in fact a lawful evil devil. Dave tells the truth twice under this

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Do you need a good tip for the next big fight? Are your battle plans in disarray? Take some two-thousand-year-old advice from Sun Tzu. Any version of *The Art of War* will do, but you might want to get your hands on a copy of ***The Illustrated Art of War***. Along with works of art from Asia's last two millennia, it contains the interpretations of Sun Tzu's words from eleven ancient scholars and military men. The monsters won't know what hit them.



DragonLance®

Sug. Retail: $27.95

The second book in the War of Souls trilogy is out there.

You can feel it calling to you.

Compelling you to join the growing tide

of Dragonlance® fans who are pushing it

even higher on the New York Times bestseller list.

And you know, in the end, you too will give in.

After all, it's the new book by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman.

You can't miss out on that.

The Power of Fantasy Wizards of the Coast *www.wizards.com/books*

All trademarks, including character names and their distinctive likenesses, are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Illus. by Matt Stawicki. ©2001 Wizards.

Game Face

Name: Peter Whitley
Alignment: Chaotic Secretive
Years Gaming: Started around 1983
Favorite Race: Nubile dwarf chicks
Favorite Class: The flexible rogue, er—fighter
Favorite Setting: A little of this, a little of that
Greatest Gaming Moment: My players were ready to infiltrate the necromancer's lab. I was unprepared and wanted the lab to be full of significant details. I discovered that through the liberal use of highly disgusting flavor, I could both entertain the group and stall for time. I described (in great detail) heads separated from bodies with eyes dripping black ichor, buckets of preserved children, a room whose stench prevented the party from entering, and lots and lots of coagulated blood. It worked, and by the next session I had my complete laboratory ready for exploration.

Show us *your* game face. Send a photo and a brief description of your gaming background, including your "vital statistics" (years gaming, your "gaming alignment," favorite race, class, and setting) and a short description of your greatest gaming moment. Keep it all under 100 words, and you might see your mug right here. Send us your game face by post or email it to dragon@wizards.com.

system (he's not lawful good, Aznimul is evil) and lies once (he claims Codexun is good), making him the CG eladrin *if* everything else is correct. And now for the home stretch: Barathor tells the truth on all counts (he's lawful good, Codexun is evil, and Dave is chaotic), while Codexun lies on all counts (contrary to his claims, he is *not* lawful good, Barathor did *not* lie at all, and Aznimul does *not* share the same good/evil axis with Dave).

So the final tally: Codexun and Aznimul are demon and devil, respectively, while Barathor and Dave are deva and eladrin.

I can't tell you how glad I am to show Mike Selinker up like this after banging my head against the wall trying to solve his other Mind Flayers puzzles. At last I have my revenge! It should be said, however, that Mr. Selinker's puzzles are typically excellent and a credit to your magazine. (As are most of his articles.)

Spencer M. Lease
Medford, MA

Thanks for the exhaustive (and thus much abridged) commentary on the April issue, Spencer. Also, congratulations for being the first to catch this error and point out the correct solution. As a reward, there's some great new Ron Spencer artwork in this very issue, and we'll give you a new Orion/Arthur story by the great Ben Bova next issue.

Also next month, we'll indulge in some rowdy halfling fun and return to the Temple of Elemental Evil. Until then, enjoy our favorite letter of this month:

The Next Editor

Here are the solutions you needed for your "logjam" cases from *Dragon* #281.

Case of the Ravening Hordes

Solution 1: Buy the hut from the dirty hermit. Offer him far more than the hut is worth so he will readily agree. The characters are now residents instead of outsiders and thus the citizens will no longer feel impelled to attack them. For extra insurance have the cleric marry Betty to the dirty hermit. It's for the group, baby.

Solution 2: Kill both Allen and Betty. Shout "Who's right now, uh huh!" a few times. Insist the DM award you experience points for the kills before the Ravening Hordes show up.

Side Effect: The other players will now distrust and fear you so you might as well also kill them. Finally, as a gesture of goodwill, you should kill yourself to prove that you're not one of those players that always puts himself first at the expense of the others. No one likes a selfish Suzy. I personally have tried this solution during a similar (well, not really) dilemma and found it to work to my complete satisfaction.

Dave, after reading my solutions I'm sure you will agree that I should be *Dragon Magazine* editor so please hurry up and fire yourself so you can hire me. Robin Demon Laws and I will write and draw the whole magazine ourselves. We will fire Pete Whitley as Art Director and make him Guy In Charge of Reading All the Stupid Letters and Emails instead.

Frank Hussey
Logjam Busting Superstar!
Olympia, WA

Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
HOLD! NO MERE GUARD AM I! I AM GOTHRAGNUR, LAST SON OF THE SETURK HOBGOBLIN CLAN! MY PEOPLE'S DESTRUCTION MOVES ME TO ACTS OF SAVAGRY!
FINE! PREPARE TO GO SQUISH, YOU--
MY LAST BATTLE-BROTHER FELL ON THIS VERY SPOT, SO I HAVE SWORN TO GUARD IT WITH MY LIFE AND PRESERVE HIS SAGA...
LATER...
...WHEN HIS CLAN SAVED MINE FROM A HORDE OF TROLLS. IT WAS THEN THAT OUR CLANS FORMED AN ALLIANCE THAT WOULD LAST FOR AS LONG AS...
MUCH LATER...
I'VE FAILED MY "ENDURE BACK HISTORY" CHECK.
IT USED TO BE THAT A MONSTER WAS A MONSTER. NOW EVERYBODY'S GOT A FREAKIN' BIOGRAPHY!
BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...
I DON'T CARE IF YOU LET HIM EAT ME... JUST MAKE IT STOP.

Book yourself for four days and nights of nonstop fun.

The **Origins**™ International Game Expo & Fair is the ultimate destination for frequent gamers like you. Play your favorite games: board, computer, trading card, miniatures, war, roleplaying, and more. Enter tournaments. Meet celebrities. Basically, it's the best of all possible worlds.

Preregister online at **www.OriginsGameExpo.com** by June 11, 2001, to save on admission and to receive the earliest event sign-up opportunity.

2001™ ORIGINS International Game Expo & Fair

July 5-8, 2001

Games . The Point of Origins .

Origins is a trademark of GAMA (the Game Manufacturer's Association). The WIZARDS OF THE COAST logo is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2001 Wizards.

WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL

by Michael G. Ryan

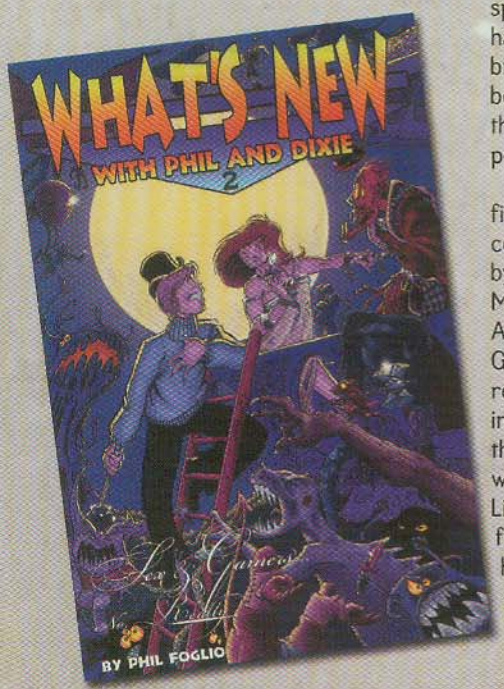
When Phil Foglio first began to draw for *Dragon Magazine*, it was purely out of laziness.

"I had an idea for a joke about chess, which I realized I could probably sell to *Dragon*," he says. "However, it would have netted me about twenty-five dollars, and what with drawing it and mailing it and everything, it just wasn't worth it. But if I came up with an entire page of jokes, I'd get at least a hundred dollars, and that would be worth it."

Thus was "What's New," the enduring comic strip about roleplaying, born.

For three years (1980-1983), the "What's New" strip ran every month in *Dragon Magazine*, until Phil had "said everything I could about roleplaying games." Ten years later, he was encouraged to revive the strip for another Wizards of the Coast publication, *The Duelist*, with a focus on trading card games. "I was intrigued," he admits, although he was still reluctant to bring the strip out of retirement—he couldn't shake the "been there, done that" feeling. "But then they offered to pay me anything I wanted," he recalls. "I could live with that."

What happened when *The Duelist* editors called to tell him that the magazine was going to cease publication? "Fifteen seconds after I hung up the phone—RING! It was the current editor of *Dragon*, asking if I'd like to move the strip over to them again," he remembers. "That's when I discovered that both magazines shared the same office space." Because the state of roleplaying had changed so much since 1983, Phil brought "What's New" back where it began once again, where it remains to this day as one of the magazine's most popular features.



Phil's come a long way from when he first began his career in drawing comics by illustrating a series of novels by Robert Asprin (the light-hearted Myth Adventures books). "When Robert Asprin sold the comic rights to WARP Graphics, they asked him if he could recommend someone to adapt the book into comic form," Phil says. "He gave them my name, much to my surprise. It was so much fun, I've never stopped." Like Phil's current work, the art remains fresh, lively, and clever . . . and if you have access to the Web, you can still sample those early drawings.

What's Stu(dio)

"What's New" is only one of many Foglio (pronounced "Folio") strips, as any visitor to **www.studiofoglio.com** will realize. Phil and his wife Kaja, who met through mutual friends ("It was all very proper and Victorian," he says of their courtship. "She was studying 'Fine Arts' when I met her. I showed her that commercial art was more respectable and profitable"), have developed an impressive catalog of strips and other related products. A separate site is home to their adult comic *XXXenophile*, leaving their original site family friendly. "Most visitors to the studiofoglio site gravitate to the order form," Phil notes. "For a lot of people, it's the only place they can find a lot of our stuff."

From *Buck Godot—Zap Gun for Hire* to the extremely popular Robert Asprin's *Myth Adventures* to the latest Foglio creation *Girl Genius: The Works*, the website offers an incredible array of Phil and Kaja's work. (A trading card game based on Girl Genius is already in the works from Cheapass Games. Cheapass Games founder James Ernest has been a strong supporter of Phil's work for many years. Phil says, "We met at a convention and hung around together. We then moved into the same house for a couple of years. Despite that, we're still friends.") Of course, fans of "What's New" and both artists'

what sorts of comments do you get from fans at shows?

"Positive ones. You very rarely get people coming up to you at shows saying, 'Wow! Your stuff really sucks! No, really, I mean it—you're the worst artist in the industry.' Those guys just stay away." -Phil Foglio

Snappy Answers to Not-So-Bright Questions

A man of many words (especially if they appear in cartoon bubbles), Phil Foglio can get right to the point if he has to. Consider the following:

Q: Is this what you thought you'd be doing for a career when you were a kid?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Is it difficult being a celebrity in this field?

A: No.

Q: Do you enjoy that level of recognition?

A: You bet.

Q: I remember quite distinctly an illustration from the book Little Myth Marker. In it, in the background, is a sign with card symbols on it: "I [heart symbol] NY," "I [spade symbol] Cats," "I [clubs symbol] Seals." And the line where the diamond symbol would appear was blocked by something in the foreground. For years, I've wondered what you'd have finished the set with. So tell me: what would it have been?

A: It was cleverly blocked for a reason.

Magic: The Gathering work will find comic collections, original art, pins, and a host of other Foglio game-related creations. Given Phil's pointed insights into the industry, you'd think he spends at least half of his time playing games.

"Um . . . ," he answers.

Half is an exaggeration, of course.

"Actually . . ." he says.

Weekends only, then?

"I don't game much at all and never have," he admits. "I hadn't gamed at all when I was doing the original 'What's New' series, and while I have gamed since then, it was never on a regular basis or for a sustained period. I enjoy it and am looking forward to gaming with my son when he's old enough."

In truth, both Phil and Kaja don't have time for gaming anyway: They work extremely long hours on their myriad projects, often as much as 12 hours a day. "Sometimes we feel very overworked indeed," he says bravely, then adds, "Pity us."

What's Due

"The way you grow as an artist/writer is by eating too much," Phil says philosophically. "Trying to do anything else is pretentious." Otherwise, he says that the best way to develop his skills is to keep working—and that's precisely what he's been doing. He and Kaja are well into their new venture *Girl Genius*, which—for the moment—Phil considers to be his most impressive work to date. "I always think the thing I'm working on now is going to be the best," he admits. "The time to ask me about the best work I've done is just before I die." The book is a collaborative effort between the two of them, something Phil thinks is a great way to work "if you and your partner each have sufficiently strong egos." He expects the new comic to be an ongoing monthly title.

Furthermore, he and *Dragon* cartoonist John Kovalic have been discussing a "What's New"/"Dork Tower" crossover. Toss in "What's New" and a healthy stockpile of other ongoing projects, and it becomes clear that Phil has a full plate in his future—the price of being one of the most successful comic artists working today. Of course, his mother couldn't be happier.

"She wanted to be an artist but couldn't follow up on it," Phil says, "because nobody went into something as frivolous as art during the Depression."

But Phil's mother wasn't the only member of his family pleased with his artistic career. "Before my father passed away, he was able to see that I was going to be a success," he remembers. "My mother says he was convinced that I had discovered some amazing scam that enabled me to steal money from stupid people. According to mom, he was very proud." D

WHAT'S TRUE

Phil and Kaja have been careful to ensure that they're surrounded by the right kind of support network when it comes to their creative talents. "We make it a policy of only hanging out with other people who create or do things," Phil says, "so everyone is secure in their own abilities and self-worth. And we can just shut up and play poker."

June Previews

Dragon

Dragon Magazine #285
Cover by Larry Elmore

The Secret Life of Halflings
by James Jacobs
From riddles to walkabouts, halfling life is about more than burgling and sneaking about behind proper tall folk.

Little Wizards
by Jesse Decker
A small package can carry some heavy firepower. Learn why it's good to be small when it comes to spellflinging.

Four in Darkness
by Monte Cook
The forces of Elemental Evil are back, and they're better armed than ever with new spells, monsters, tactics, and a demonic template.

Enchantment
by Ben Bova
The wicked Morganna has a trap in store for young Arthur, and it's up to Orion to discover it in time.

Plus: New dungeon tiles, the lightbearer prestige class, "Faiths of Faerûn," "Sage Advice," "Vs. Pixies," "Nodwick," "Sage Advice," "The Play's the Thing," "Dork Tower," "What's New," "Dragonmirth," and plenty more!

$5.99 U.S./$8.99 CAN
TSR Product No. 82285

Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting

A Campaign Setting
by Ed Greenwood, Sean K. Reynolds, Skip Williams, and Robert Heinsoo

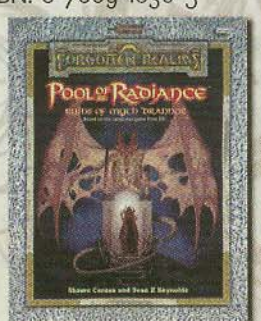
The new *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* is here! It has new feats, domains, spells, monsters, prestige classes, NPCs, and new rules for things like wild magic zones, the shadow weave, and spellfire! Have you been looking to play a runecaster or Red Wizard? Do you need rules for a dracolich? Want to know the domains of every Forgotten Realms deity? Look no further. It's all inside!

New to the Forgotten Realms? This book has everything you need! The writers took information from hundreds of Forgotten Realms sources and neatly boiled it all down to give you the essence of everywhere and everything.

Have you been a fan of Faerûn for years? Don't miss all the recent events and new secrets revealed within.

Forgotten Realms is synonymous with high fantasy, but every type of fantasy you ever wanted to play is between these covers! Mighty magic, dreadful enemies, and incredible adventures await you within!

$39.95/$61.95 CAN
WTC11836
ISBN: 0-7869-1836-5



Pool of Radiance: Attack on Myth Drannor

A Forgotten Realms Adventure
by Sean K. Reynolds with Shawn Carnes

Continue the adventures of your characters from the *Pool of Radiance* computer game with this awesome adventure. Prepare yourself for the dangers of fabled Myth Drannor!

Battle the Cult of the Dragon in a struggle to destroy a dracolich's phylactery with the fate of Faerûn hanging in the balance.

This adventure contains many new magic items for the new edition of the game!

$17.95/$27.99 CAN • TSR11710
ISBN: 0-7869-1710-5

The Power of Pewter Combined with the Radiance of Full-Lead Crystal.

A Masterpiece of Fantasy Art

- A masterpiece of fantasy art by award-winning sculptor Casey Eskeridge.
- Individually cast in the finest pewter.
- Accentuated by an array of colorful patinas.
- Enhanced by the mystical glow of shimmering full-lead crystal.
- An enchanting showpiece for the home or office.
- Capture the power of Merlin: The Creation of Stonehenge.

Order now!

Sculpture shown smaller than actual size of 11" (27.9 cm) in height, including lead crystal base.

The Franklin Mint
Franklin Center, PA 19091-0001

Please mail by June 30, 2001.

Please enter my order for *MERLIN: The Creation of Stonehenge,* an original sculpture by Casey Eskeridge. I need SEND NO MONEY NOW. I will be billed for my sculpture in 5 equal monthly installments of $49.* each, with the first payment due prior to shipment. *Limit: one sculpture per collector.*

** Plus my state sales tax and a one-time charge of $5.95 for shipping and handling.*

SIGNATURE _____
ALL ORDERS ARE SUBJECT TO ACCEPTANCE

MR/MRS/MISS _____
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS _____ APT. # _____

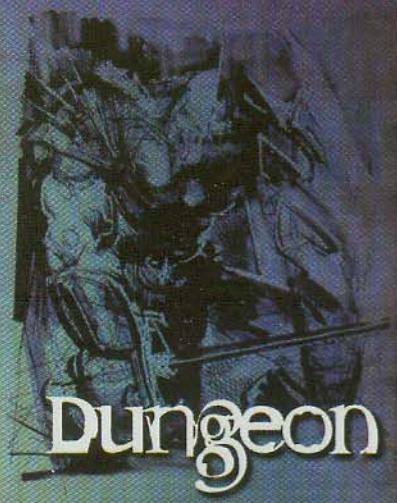
CITY/STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE # (_____) _____

21450-07-001

THE FRANKLIN MINT

The Franklin Mint
Sharing Your Passion For Collecting



Dungeon Magazine #87
Cover by Carl Critchlow

The Gate at Galath's Roost
By Skip Williams
The secret to the Zhentarim's sinister plot lies beneath the ruins of a forlorn keep.
A D&D Forgotten Realms adventure for 1st-level PCs but adaptable for levels 2-4.

Glacier Season
By David Eckelberry
A half-dragon exile seeks revenge against his draconic father, and the PCs are drawn into the fray.
A D&D adventure for 15th-level PCs but adaptable for levels 10-20.

The Cradle of Madness
By Robert Lee
Madness grips the Danwick family and threatens to awaken a sleeping god.
A D&D adventure for 6th-level PCs but adaptable for levels 3-8.

Valley of the Snails
By W. Jason Peck
What strange fate befalls creatures that trespass in the valley of the Slithering Snails?
A D&D adventure for 1st-level PCs but adaptable for levels 2-7.

PLUS: FREE CD INSERT!
- Bonus D&D adventures
- *Dungeon Magazine* #1
- Random dungeon generator
- And much more!

$5.99 US/$8.99 CAN
TSR Product No. 82087

POOL OF RADIANCE
THE RUINS OF MYTH DRANNOR
A Forgotten Realms Novel
by Carrie A. Bebris

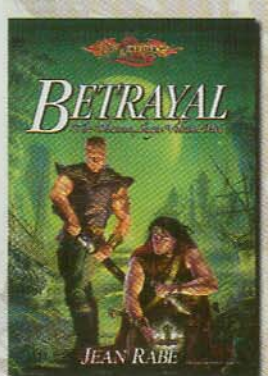
A diabolical cult, a malevolent pool, a terrifying plan . . . The fate of all Faerûn lies with four reluctant heroes. *Pool of Radiance: The Ruins of Myth Drannor* is a novelization of the computer game from industry-leader SSI. Want to learn the full story? Pick up this book!

$6.99/$9.99 CAN • TSR21387 • ISBN: 0-7869-1387-8

THE SHATTERED MASK
A Forgotten Realms Novel
by Richard Lee Byers

When the matriarch of one of Sembia's oldest merchant families is duped by an evil wizard into an assassination attempt on her own husband, her family is thrown into turmoil.

$6.99/$9.99 CAN • WTC21826 • ISBN: 0-7869-1862-4



BETRAYAL
A Dragonlance Novel
by Jean Rabe

All Dhamon Grimwulf wants is a cure for the painful dragon scale embedded in his leg. All his motley companions want are adventure and riches. Everywhere they go, minions of evil shadow them. Although he has sworn off heroism, Dhamon can't escape the horrors convulsing Krynn—or the betrayal that stalks him.

$24.95/$34.95 CAN • WTC21860 •
ISBN: 0-7869-1860-8

JULY

Dragon's Bluff	DL Novel	$6.99
Servant of the Shard	FR Novel	$7.99
Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil	D&D Super Adventure	$17.95
Tome and Blood	D&D Accessory	$19.95

AUGUST

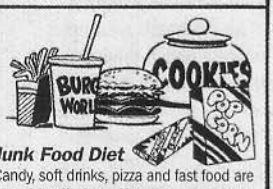
Elminster in Hell	FR Novel	$24.95
Brother of the Dragon	DL Novel	$6.99
Heart of Nightfang Spire	D&D Adventure	$9.95
Magic of Faerûn	FR Accessory	$29.95

Drizzt. Errtu. Bvrip!

Thousands of words like these and more are yours to read, courtesy of the bestselling creator of the Dark Elf Trilogy. Spend an Hour with R.A. Salvatore and find out how he does it — and maybe even what strange combination of consonants is next.

Adopt a d12

Open your heart - and your dicebag to one of these poor, neglected dodecahedrons. Swing a greataxe. Play a barbarian. Make up uses.



Junk Food Diet

Candy, soft drinks, pizza and fast food are what it's all about. You may not get any real nutrition, but the sugar and caffeine will keep you going long enough to get in some serious gaming.

Scarf away! *Really Works!*

Eliminates Orcs, Gnolls, Knights and Other Pests

No other minis battle game can rid your gaming table of so many different household miniatures like Chainmail does. Using the proven power of D&D, you can strategically destroy your opponents using a potent combination of spells and steel. Try Chainmail once, and you'll wonder how ever played without it.

Won't harm furniture!

3 4 5 6 3 *Low Stat Grab Bag*

Botched character stat die rolls — perfect for peasants, lackeys and arrow fodder.

Ineffectual Armor is IN!

Check out our fine array of loincloths, unarmored midriffs, plastic platemail and other adventurous adventurer's gear that wouldn't stop a toddler with a croquet mallet.

See the ever-popular chainmail Bikini!

You Can Be an Author

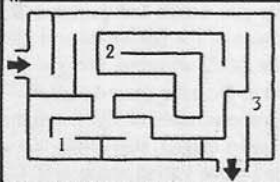
In less than two hours, you can help create the world's next great work of fiction. Audience participation is a must as a room of your fellow future writers comes up with ideas to help Spin a Yarn with Ed Greenwood. In almost no time at all, you will have wrought a new short story that will be globally distributed over the web.

Fool Your Friends!

Hide From Your Enemies!

Strap on your favorite face covering and search the entire con for clues to solve the riddle. Two days of fun and intrigue await those who play A Game of Masks.

Win prizes!



Are YOU Up to the Challenge?

Not for the faint of heart. Go toe-to-toe with some of the toughest monsters and head-to-head against some of the best DMs around. Wizards of the Coast D&D game staffers will run you through two hours of pure fun. But don't get too attached to your character.

Life-Sized Lando!

Meet the dashingly fantabulous **Billy Dee Williams**, the man who played the most charming con-man/scoundrel turned Rebel general in one movie flat to ever grace the silver screen: Lando Calrissian.

Learn How to Meet Xena Babes

Have you always wanted to meet, maybe even talk with women like Aphrodite and Callisto from Xena: Warrior Princess? It's easy! Just ask **Alexandra Tydings** and **Hudson Leick** how. Before you know it, you'll be chatting it up with love goddesses and evil princesses just like the ones on TV!

VA VA VAVOOM!

See the Future!

Simple instructions will have you peering weeks, months, even further into the future! Check out the booths, demos, seminars and more to find out what's in store for you and the rest of the gaming world.

Amazing STENCH!

Gross out your friends! Works within 24-hrs! **P.U.!**

Bag-o-FREE-Stuff

There's no telling what you'll end up with when you start filling your swag bag. Pick one up and test the tensile strength of its welded seams by cramming it full of a ton of cool free junk you get at the booths.

goodies galore!

Doo-Dads, Gewgaws & Tchotchkes!

Call 'em collectibles if it makes you feel better, but we've just got booths full of really cool stuff. Movie props, unaired TV episodes, Morocco Mole necklaces and enough memorabilia to choke a kewpie doll.

DICE! DICE! DICE!

Marvel at what may be the world's largest collective collection of actively used polyhedrons! See d4s, d6s, d8s, d10s, d12s, d20s (of course); even d30s and d100s.

Anime for the Otaku in You

If you like robots that turn into stuff, big eyes, little mouths, dubbing or captioning, you'll go nuts over all the stuff we've got in-store. ***Banzai!***

Mysterious d2

Easily concealed in the palm of your hand — or in a vending machine! Get yours today.

Only 25c!

Hey, *ALIENS* — the Doctor is IN

Dr. Stephen Franklin, played by Richard Biggs, has recently arrived from Babylon 5 and will be on-call to deal with fan-related symptoms.

VAMPIRES ARE REAL

Meet the coolest blood-sucker around: Spike from Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Or at least meet James Marsters, the coolest guy to play the coolest blood-sucker around.

NO GARLIC, PLEASE

Glaive-Gisarme BLOWOUT

We've got tons of pole arms left over from Unearthed Arcana. **Ask about our Bec de corbins!**

Non-Stop Gaming MADNESS

It's four days straight of around-the-clock gaming. You'd be crazy to miss it and clinically insane if you don't. **96 Hours of Games!**

Monsters created — right before your eyes!

Rules and Races. Charts and Classes. Tables and Treasure. Stats and Spells. Feats and Skills. Monsters, Maps and More. Spend less time working on a game and more time playing it. See the Master Tools

Wholesale Irony Treasure

Tired of fighting the bad guy only to find the doo-dad that would've turned the tide of battle ***after*** the fact? Get it before it's placed: Holy Avengers slated for lich-ridden crypts, Rings of Fire Resistance on the way to Red Dragon lairs and much, much more.

RARE!

Auto-graphed Books

We've got a huge shipment of the newest Dragonlance hardback, Dragons of a Lost Star. And once Margaret and Tracy sign them, they'll be autographed copies. Pick up yours and say "Will you sign my book?"

Reading Minds Made Easy

Starfleet's most prominent empath, Lt. Commander Deanna Troi, can tell what you're feeling. *(Especially if it's something like: "I feel like getting an autograph from Marina Sirtis.")*

Reversible Elf Ears

Each one easily fits on either ear — saves on spirit gum. No more embarrassment of having your ears on backwards.

Grarr! Firk! yoikes! Huzzah!

Authentic Battle Cries and MORE! Choose from a huge assortment of mighty battle cries, Ren faire cheers and miscellaneous non-genre specific shouts. Get five for the price of six. **Zounds!**

Over 1001 Things to Do

Tons of fun for you and your friends, the World-Famous GenCon offers more games and activities packed into four days than you can imagine. You can be one of over 25,000 people playing games around the clock for close to 96 hours straight. With games, celebrities, costumes, prizes, merchandise and tons of FREE stuff, it's the most fun you can have without x-ray gogs & a pocket spy scope.

Learning Magic is E-Z

There's no trick to learning the basic rules of magic. Just check out chapter ten in the Player's Handbook. It's only eleven pages —you'll have it nailed in no time.

2001 GEN CON GAME FAIR

August 2-5, 2001

Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, WI

www.GenConGameFair.com

For more information, please call: 1-800-529-EXPO

Miracle Cover-All Teeny Legal Copy—with Pumice!

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. ©2001 Wizards. Pumice.

The legendary precursor to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS returns!

CHAINMAIL

Wizards of the Coast announces that *CHAINMAIL*, the wargame that inspired the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, will return in a new incarnation inspired by 3rd Edition D&D!

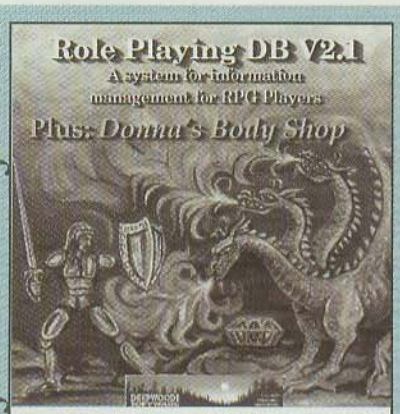
CHAINMAIL is a skirmish-level miniatures game designed with versatile and easy-to-learn rules based on the d20 game system. Classic D&D creatures become three-dimensional in the intricately designed metal models that can be painted and embellished to add lifelike detail to each model. Players will be able to create warbands of 2-15 models representing one of six factions, or combine models from different factions, and fight for survival in the region of The Sundered Empire. The victors will control who becomes the next god of war!

You'll be able to convert your D&D characters and creatures to *CHAINMAIL* to bring them to life on the battlefield, and then return them to the your regular D&D game. Spellcasters will be able to cast classic D&D spells like *sleep, magic missile, command,* and *cause fear.* Rules for commands and morale will be included, bringing the chaos of the battlefield and the power of leadership to the D&D universe. The game will also feature new creatures like new demons (allied with the gnolls), felldrakes (draconic allies of the elves), battle constructs (fueled by human magic), elementals (commanded by the dwarves), and more varied and powerful skeletons and zombies.

Field a hearty band of dwarves, and send your grenadiers to blow the enemy to kingdom come! Marshal an army of elves, and rain arrows down upon your foes! Let battle constructs lead your human forces into combat! Raise a warband from crypts and graveyards, and send your undead servants to fight! Hear the call of the horde, and charge into battle with goblins, hobgoblins, orcs, and ogres! Or gather a group of demon-allied gnolls, and let loose the dogs of war!

CHAINMAIL is a face-paced, turn-based miniatures game. Play games in less than a half an hour, or set up a massive, marathon free-for-all with several friends!

GAMER'S GUIDE



Keep Track of Your Role Playing World!

Stay on top of your game with *Role Playing DB V2.1*, a unique database software that lets you keep track of your characters, spells, monsters, treasures, tricks, traps, dungeons and more!

Also included — *Donna's Body Shop*, a collection of graphical "body parts" which can be combined to create a "self-portrait" of a player's character in TIFF, GIF, and JPEG format files — compatible with all graphics editors.

Available at mww.deepsoft.com

Secure on-line ordering
All major credit cards accepted!

The Role Playing Database runs under both Linux and MS-Windows.

SEEKING OUT-OF-PRINT TITLES?
NEED THE NEW STUFF TOO?

D&D® 3RD EDITION
d20
AD&D® 2ND EDITION
AD&D® 1ST EDITION
BASIC D&D®

25 YEARS OF TSR... the hit pointe ALL IN ONE SPOT

http://www.hitpointe.com

Mail-order Game Shop
Specializing in Used and Out-of-Print
D&D®, AD&D® and
White Wolf's World of Darkness®
game products.

No computer? Write for current price list:

540 North Lapeer Road, Suite 255
Orion Township, MI 48362

email • web R Role Playing Game Association Events: For more information on the RPGA and RPGA events, visit www.rpga.com.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

DAY — JUNE CONVENTIONS

Jun 7–10 — **BEN CON 2001** Colorado
Holiday Inn Southeast, Aurora • Contact: Stephen Wales • 22471 Princeton Dr. • Aurora, CO 80018-5600 • www.bengames.org

Jun 16–17 — **BATTLECON** California
San Diego • Contact: Battlecon • 3954 Harney St. • San Diego, CA 92110

Jun 22–24 — **GURU CON 5** Ohio
Dragon View, Springfield • Contact: Keith Hoffman • 5119 S Tecumseh Rd. • Springfield, OH 45502-9758

Jun 22–24 — **CONSORTIUM** Texas
Radisson Airport, Houston • Contact: ConSortium • PMB 367 • 3118 FM 528 • Webster, TX 77598 • www.con-sortium.org
Featuring: Special guests David Webber and Mike Stackpole, workshops, RPGA events.

Jun 22–24 — **LUNAR REVOLUTION** Georgia
Savannah Marriott Riverfront, Savannah • Contact: Alfred Bonnabel 2417 Longhills Rd. • Benton, AR 72015 • www.lunarevolution.com

DAY — UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

July 7 — **UK GAMES FEST** England
Sportdentre, Harlow, Essex • Contact: 262 The Dashes • Harlow, Essex CM20 3RZ • England • uk_games.fest@virgin.net • www.freespace.virgin.net/utopian.tiger/gf.htm

July 20–22 — **RUNECON** Connecticut
Ramada Inn, Plainville • Contact: RuneCon LLC. • P.O. Box 27 • Ashford, CT 06278 • www.runecon.com
Featuring: RPGs, CCGs, board games, LARPs, miniature painting, and dealers.

July 27–29 — **HEXACON 11** Arizona
Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort, Scottsdale • Contact: Hexacon 11 • P.O. Box 62613 • Phoenix, AZ 85082 • the_lop@casfs.org
www.hexacon.org
Featuring: RPGs, CCGs, and more.

Aug 10–19 — **GAMEFEST XXII** California
San Diego • Contact: Gamefest • 3954 Harney St. • San Diego, CA 92110
Featuring: RPGs, CCGs, board games, war games, miniature painting, and dealers.

Aug 24–26 — **BUBONICON 33** New Mexico
Howard Johnson East, Albuquerque • Contact: NMSF Conference • P.O. Box 37257 • Albuquerque, NM 87176 • cwcraig@nmia.com
www.bubonicon.home.att.net
Featuring: Guest artists and authors, costume contest, films screenings, and more.

JUNE CHAT EVENTS

For the most up-to-date information, please visit the calendars found at www.wizards.com/chat.

+2 Crossbow

Shipped free.*

Get the worlds of the Dungeons & Dragons® game delivered to your door, free when you shop at store.wizards.com. That's the online store for Wizards of the Coast, makers of all those great D&D® roleplaying products, like the *Player's Handbook*, *Psionics Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and the *Forgotten Realms® Campaign Setting*. Shop at the source and get free shipping. Unless you happen to live in Faerûn.

store.wizards.com

Saving you way more than gas money.

*Free shipping applies to orders of $40.00 or more with a U.S. destination that choose the standard 3-day shipping option. International shipping destinations will have shipping charges reduced by $2.99 USD.

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2001 Wizards.

countdown to the

FORGOTTEN REALMS

TEN REASONS

You'll Love the Book—Even if You Hate the Realms

If you've never played in the FORGOTTEN REALMS before, or if you're one of those Faerûn-haters who writes "Elminster Sux!" on message boards, then this preview is for you.

For fans of the setting, we know you'll have it in your hot little hands the day it comes out (about a week after this issue hits he stands). The things you loved about earlier editions are still there, but the new version offers far more rules information along with a new focus on the real heroes of Faerûn: your characters.

The new edition of the world's most popular D&D setting has something for everyone who plays the game, even if you'd love nothing more than a half hour alone in a room with Elminster and a hot poker. In many ways, the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* is as useful to a GREYHAWK fan or a DM who has spent five years developing her own campaign as it is for a die-hard fan of the collected works of R.A. Salvatore. The book could almost be called a "D&D Rules Companion," with the added bonus of more than 100 pages of great campaign locations. Even when the book turns to Faerûn-specific information, there are rules galore, just waiting for an industrious DM to mine them for her own setting.

After a brief introduction that's perfect for those who've never adventured in Faerûn, the book offers nine chapters of meaty content.

Characters

For those who play in other campaigns, this section is one of the ripest for plunder. After an introduction with tips on converting existing characters to the Forgotten Realms campaign, this chapter offers rules on playing gold dwarves, gray dwarves, shield dwarves, drow, sun elves, wild elves, wood elves, deep gnomes, rock gnomes, ghostwise halflings, strongheart halflings, aasimar, genasi, and tieflings—all in addition to the classic D&D races from the *Players Handbook*, some with minor rules changes.

This chapter also provides a huge chart of information for characters based on the region in which they were raised. All characters gain a regional language, eligibility for regional feats, and equipment peculiar to their area. Even if you don't play in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, this chart is a great resource: change the names, and you have a customized list for your own campaign.

Magic

The addition of sorcerers to the new campaign comes naturally, without a cataclysm like the Time of Troubles. Seems like those guys have been here all the time, but boy do they make a lot of sense considering the flavor of the various regions in Faerûn.

What's great about this chapter, aside from the obvious benefit of new spells, is the way various forms of unusual magic are detailed and explained. Spellfire, wild magic,

NEW ITEM: BLADE BOOT

Custom-fitted to the wearer's own boots, this device consists of a sturdy sole assembly concealing a spring-loaded dagger. The buyer can simply add one blade to either of his boots at the given cost, or buy a matched set for double the given cost.

The wearer's movement is not impaired when the blades are retracted. With one or more blades extended, the wearer cannot run or charge. A monk using the blade attacks as if unarmed. The Weapon Finesse feat can be applied to blade boots.

Note: A character wearing blade boots gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Escape Artist checks made to escape from rope bonds.

It takes a character trained in both Craft (cobbling) and Craft (weaponsmithing) to make blade boots. The Craft DC is 20 to refit an existing boot with a blade, or 15 to make a new pair. Refitting a boot takes about a day of work, if the blade and materials are on hand, or a week if they must be fashioned from scratch. Making a new pair of blade boots requires about a week.

shadow-weave magic, portals . . . it's all part of the FORGOTTEN REALMS, and it's all easy to add to your own campaign.

Life in Faerûn

This 20-page chapter is a godsend for method actors and DMs who love to make their campaigns rich with detail. It covers such topics as Time and Seasons, Lore of the Land, Home and Hearth, Coin and Commerce, Magic in Society, and Craft and Engineering. One of the coolest rules additions comes from this chapter in the form of more than twenty-five new pieces of equipment, a sample of which you can enjoy in the sidebar.

Geography

This huge section (over 100 pages) takes you from the Heartlands to the jungles of Chult to the Island Kingdoms to the Moonsea. Exotic lands like Zakhara and Kara Tur are mentioned, but the focus is on central Faerûn, where most players adventure and most of the FORGOTTEN REALMS novels take place. Some of these locations are new even to fans of earlier editions of the FORGOTTEN REALMS, and the cities have more detail than ever before—perfect for those DMs who want to swipe just a few of their favorite locations to place in a home campaign. For instance, here's just the stat block for the Silver Marches entry:

Capital: Silverymoon
Population: 1,090,800 (humans 40%, dwarves 20%, elves 20%, half-elves 10%, halflings 5%, gnomes 2%, half-orcs 2%)
Government: Confederation of lords headed by Alustriel of Silverymoon
Religions: Corellon Larethian, Helm, Lathander, Mielikki, Moradin, Mystra, Oghma, Selûne, Sune, Tymora
Imports: Armor, books, manufactured goods, pottery, spices, wine
Exports: Dwarven and elven craftwork, furs, heroes, precious metals
Alignment: LG, NG, CG

Deities

This chapter describes the faiths of thirty deities, plenty to get you started in a world rich with worship and divine magic. For information on the clerics of these and other faiths, keep an eye on the "Faiths of Faerûn" series in this humble periodical.

The deities chapter also includes a cosmology of Toril and guidelines for worship in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, including a nod toward the Outer Planes (which are explored in more detail in the upcoming *MANUAL OF THE PLANES*).

The most exciting element of this chapter is the return of a god once thought destroyed during the Time of Troubles, a Realms-shattering event that bridged the gap between 1st and 2nd Edition. Remember Bane, the original Dark Overlord who menaced Toril for ages before he met his end in the Time of Troubles? Turns out he saw it coming and prepared his half-demon son to contain his essence until he could return to his rightful place. That's right, boys and girls, Bane is back, and he's in a nasty mood.

History

Okay, so here's a chapter that's useful mainly to those who really will play in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. Of course, that's most of you, so what's the problem? For neophytes to Faerûn, this short chapter (7 pages) provides the perfect primer to understanding the important events that have shaped the world. For those who crave even more detail on what is arguably the most comprehensively detailed campaign world, the Wizards of the Coast website offers a dizzying array of free and inexpensive downloads of previously published products, and most of the information in them is eminently suitable for a 3rd Edition campaign.

Organizations

This chapter is just awesome for DMs who want a set of continuing villains (or allies) with which to harry their players. From the Cult of the Dragon to the Zhentarim, these secret societies and alliances are an integral part of the FORGOTTEN REALMS but have no problem standing on their own for other settings. The way we see it, no campaign should be without the Red Wizards of Thay or the People of the Black Blood, anyway.

Running the Realms

You'd think a chapter with this title would be interesting only to those actually playing in the setting, but with rules for nineteen more PC races, monsters with levels, overland travel, scrolls, gems, and characters above 20th level, it's a great resource for any DM. At a lean 13 pages, this chapter is a concentrated treasure for anyone.

Monsters

For everyone who's been waiting for some of the seemingly overlooked monsters, here are the death tyrant, dracolich, kir-lanan gargoyle, rothé, shade, and six exotic animals, including everyone's favorite flying kitty, the tressym.

Adventures

Two short adventures give fledgling DMs and veterans alike a quick way to get the players started. One deals with a Red Wizard enclave and is perfect for 1st- and 2nd-level characters. The other is a daunting dragon hunt that only characters of 16th level or higher should even consider.

Check out the new book for yourself, and then decide whether to run a full-blown campaign in Faerûn or simply adopt your favorite new rules into your own campaign, be it GREYHAWK, DRAGONLANCE, RAVENLOFT, or a world of your own design. Either way, the new *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* provides an unforgettable resource for any gamer.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Here are a few numbers to consider when debating whether you want a copy of the new *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*—even if you don't plan to play in Faerûn.

Player character race variants	18
New feats	50
Monsters	6
Religions/gods	120
Organizations	12
Sidebars	49
Adventures	2
Tables	39
Maps	12
Clerical domains	33
New types of magic	7
Spells	38
No. of 650MB -CDs required to hold the files	15
Pages	320
Words	300,000+
Final file size, with art	10 GB

UP ON A SOAPBOX

SUMMARIZING THE RESULTS

by Gary Gygax

As you know, initial ratings were drawn from about 250 respondents. Thanks to Johnn Four of the Role-Playing Tips Weekly e-zine (www.roleplayingtips.com), nearly 1,800 more were added! To refresh your memory, the elements of a roleplaying game listed for rating were:

1. Building (construction, land acquisition, and so on)
2. Business (an occupation aside from "adventuring")
3. Character Development (detailing game persona's "history")
4. Combat
5. Economics
6. Exploration (of dungeons and for larger discovery)
7. Intrigue
8. Politics
9. Problem Solving
10. Questing
11. Random Chance (encounters, combat resolution, and so on)
12. Role Assumption (staying "in character" in actions/thinking)
13. Roleplaying (ditto, and speaking thus when playing)
14. Story (backstory and in play)
15. Strategy
16. Theatrics (occasional histrionics and sound effects)

The survey was a broad one, and many people outside the USA answered it. The most striking thing about the average response numbers is that there is relatively little difference between male and female respondants and the neophyte ratings. Without speaking to the reliability of the results, for the poll is certainly skewed, the respondents all being active online gamers, the ratings certainly tell us something important about what the roleplaying game participant believes is important in the game. As a cautionary, do remember that the vast majority of respondents are oriented toward fantasy roleplaying games. In all respects, I am gratified to see that character development and role assumption, were recognized as crucial elements!

In a wrap-up of this subject in next month's issue, I'll pass along my thoughts as to the whole survey, the specific ratings of the fourteen elements, plus speak a bit on the respondents' other input. About a third of the respondents added a 17th "element" to the list. A small percentage actually added two or more things. Come back to share the final analysis.

Paper or Plastic?

Hey, passing GO and putting in that last piece of the puzzle are still fun. And at The Game Keeper® stores, you'll find the widest range of games anywhere, from games you play on your tabletop to those you play on your desktop. So, whether you're into roleplaying and strategy or cards and video games, you can find the games you want to have fun with.

The Game Keeper® game stores.

We know games.

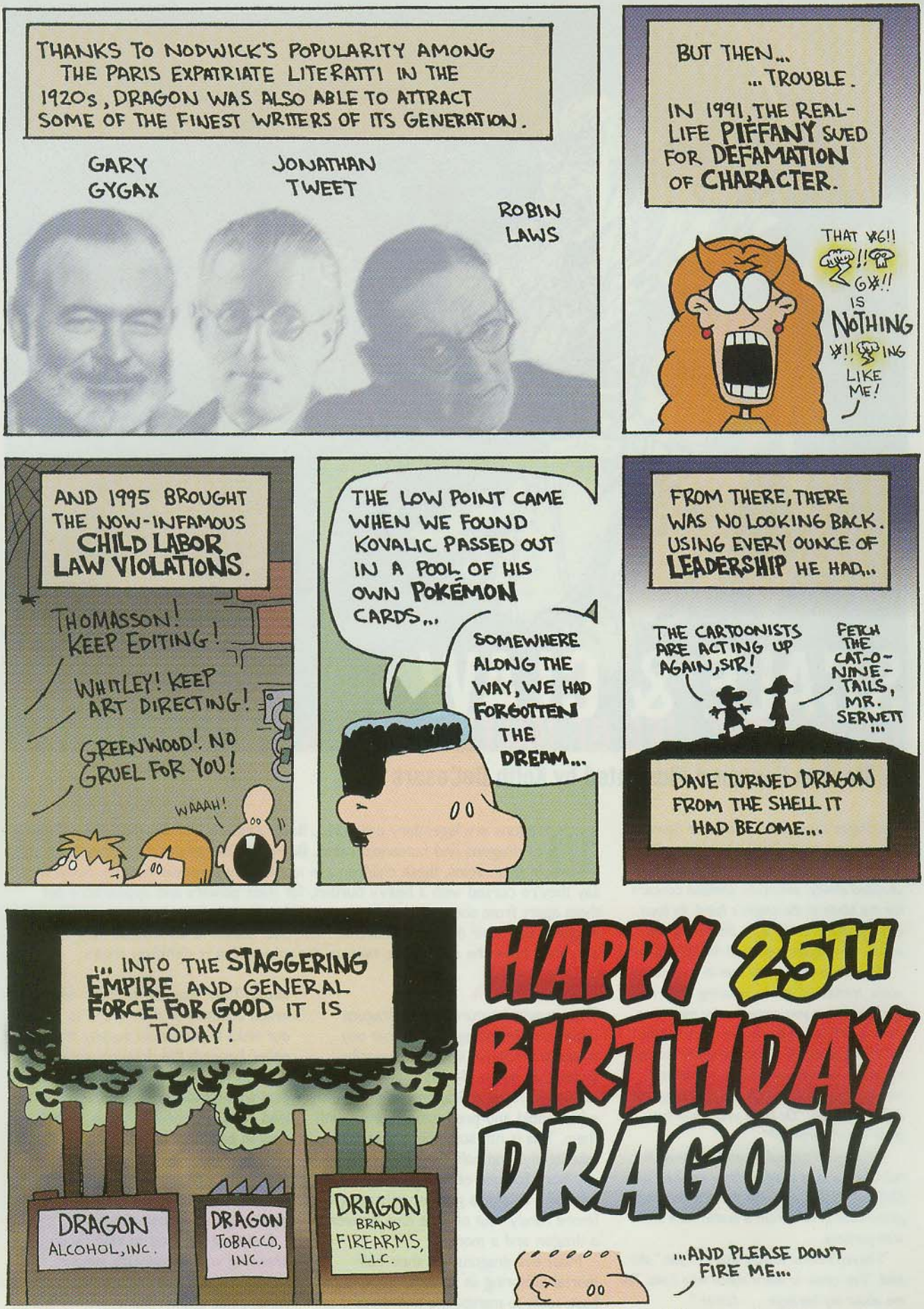
www.wizards.com/gamekeeper

THE GAME KEEPER®

WIZARDS OF THE COAST and THE GAME KEEPER are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. ©2000 Wizards.

DORK TOWER PRESENTS:
DRAGON
BEHIND THE MUSIC: THE TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY
1978, RENTON, WA: A YOUNG DAVE GROSS, PLAYING WITH HIS CHEMISTRY SET IN HIS UNCLE'S BARN, ACCIDENTALLY CREATES DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.
FOOM
EUREKA!
... AND THUS WIZARDS OF THE COAST IS BORN
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS WAS AN INSTANT HIT, AND DAVE REALIZED THE WORLD WAS CRYING FOR A GAME-BASED MAGAZINE.
... BUT BASED ON WHICH GAME? WHICH?
MONOPOLY...?
SCRABBLE...?
PARCHEESI...?
SNAP
WAIT! I HAVE IT!
NOW ALL HE NEEDED WAS A NAME...
HMMM ...
DRUGON
DRIGON
DREGON
DROGON
STAR-WARS GAMER
KNOWING HE REQUIRED MASSIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, DAVE WAS SOON INTRODUCED TO INTERNATIONAL CHEESE MOGUL PHIL FOGLIO, WHO BROUGHT TO DRAGON NOT ONLY HIS MILLIONS...
GENTLEMAN FINANCER
... BUT ALSO "WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL AND DIXIE."
(ALTHOUGH, WHEN IT FIRST APPEARED, IT LOOKED A BIT DIFFERENT THAN IT DOES NOW)
REALIZING THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE CARTOONS AND CARTOONISTS PLAY IN THE SUCCESS OF ANY MAGAZINE, IN 1979 DAVE BROUGHT ONBOARD NODWICK AND DORK TOWER.
NODWICK
CARSON THE MUSKRAT
(THESE, TOO, HAVE SUBTLEY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS...)
EARLY NODWICK
EARLY CARSON THE MUSKRAT

(Nodwick © Williams; Yamara © Adams, Manui - with apologies and respect)


THANKS TO NODWICK'S POPULARITY AMONG THE PARIS EXPATRIATE LITERATTI IN THE 1920s, DRAGON WAS ALSO ABLE TO ATTRACT SOME OF THE FINEST WRITERS OF ITS GENERATION.
GARY GYGAX
JONATHAN TWEET
ROBIN LAWS
BUT THEN...
...TROUBLE.
IN 1991, THE REAL-LIFE PIFFANY SUED FOR DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER.
THAT &%6!!
6&%!!
IS NOTHING
&%!!ING LIKE ME!
AND 1995 BROUGHT THE NOW-INFAMOUS CHILD LABOR LAW VIOLATIONS.
THOMASSON! KEEP EDITING!
WHITLEY! KEEP ART DIRECTING!
GREENWOOD! NO GRUEL FOR YOU!
WAAAH!
THE LOW POINT CAME WHEN WE FOUND KOVALIC PASSED OUT IN A POOL OF HIS OWN POKÉMON CARDS...
SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, WE HAD FORGOTTEN THE DREAM...
FROM THERE, THERE WAS NO LOOKING BACK. USING EVERY OUNCE OF LEADERSHIP HE HAD...
THE CARTOONISTS ARE ACTING UP AGAIN, SIR!
FETCH THE CAT-O-NINE-TAILS, MR. SERNETT
DAVE TURNED DRAGON FROM THE SHELL IT HAD BECOME...
...INTO THE STAGGERING EMPIRE AND GENERAL FORCE FOR GOOD IT IS TODAY!
DRAGON ALCOHOL, INC.
DRAGON TOBACCO, INC.
DRAGON BRAND FIREARMS, LLC.
HAPPY 25TH BIRTHDAY DRAGON!
...AND PLEASE DON'T FIRE ME...

©2001 shetland productions john@kovalic.com http://www.dorktower.com

SCALE & CLAW

THE SECRET LIFE OF HALF-DRAGONS

by Stephen Kenson • illustrated by Keith DeCesare

The dragon regarded the armored figure. The cavern was lit only by the glow of the lantern at the knight's feet. The great wyrm uncoiled slowly, sinuously, without concern for the blade in the knight's hand, its keen edge gleaming in the light. Stretching his wings, the dragon appraised the bold figure.

"So, brave knight," he said in a rumbling voice, trickles of smoke escaping from his nostrils, "have you come to slay me, as so many other would-be heroes have before you?" He gestured contemptuously toward the blackened bones and bits of charred metal scattered about his lair. The dragon's eyes narrowed. "Or have you come for some other purpose?"

The knight reached up and removed her helm, and a long braid of fiery red hair tumbled out. Amber eyes like the dragon's own gazed back at him from a scaled face stern with purpose.

"I haven't come to slay you . . . yet," she said. "I've come to learn about who I am. Tell me about my heritage . . . father."

Dragons are legendary creatures. Rarer still are half-dragons, the offspring of dragons and humanoid races. Born with the power of a dragon's blood in their veins, these children are touched by a special destiny. Some might say they're cursed with a heavy burden, for their powers and appearance set them apart from society, and their mortal blood taints them in the eyes of many dragons. But their destiny remains in their own hands, to do with as they will, if only they have the courage to take up the power that is rightfully theirs.

Of Fated Birth

Their magical nature makes dragons capable of breeding with almost any material creature, if not necessarily inclined to do so. By assuming humanoid form, a dragon can mate with a humanoid and produce offspring with them. This is not something dragons take lightly, and half-dragons are usually born for one of two reasons: as part of a dragon's greater scheming or (more rarely) out of true love between a dragon and a mortal.

Most evil dragons see their half-mortal offspring as valuable servants at best, tools to manipulate and discard at worst. They sometimes find it useful to breed children of their blood to carry out tasks in humanoid society that are either beneath the dragon's notice or difficult for such a powerful creature to deal with unnoticed. Half-dragons often lead cults or secret alliances in their dragon parent's name, ruling by virtue of their draconic blood. In the distant past, evil dragons even gave rise to entire bloodlines of evil half-dragons to build empires in their names.

Evil dragons tend to limit their breeding with humanoids simply because they don't trust others, and history has shown that half-dragon

offspring are often treacherous and willing to overthrow and slay their parent in order to seize power and wealth for themselves. The dragons are also cautious about allowing too many of their arcane secrets to fall into other hands.

Good dragons, too, have been known to produce half-dragon offspring for a particular purpose. While not as callous and calculating as their chromatic cousins, the metallic dragons often see half-dragons as a means to an end. In their case, that usually means the defeat of some danger that threatens, particularly if it's been unleashed by evil dragons. Metallic half-dragons often appear in response to the presence of evil half-dragons to act as champions against the forces of evil.

In some rare instances, a half-dragon child will result from a loving union between a dragon and a mortal. Good dragons have been known to fall in love with particularly good-hearted humanoids, although such unions are nearly always doomed to a tragic end. Although the dragon can assume humanoid form, and often does in order to be close to a loved one, sooner or later the dragon must face the fact that his beloved will age and die. Even elves are short-lived by dragon standards. Dragons are also drawn by their natural instincts away from humanoid society sooner or later. Many tragic love stories involve the love between a mortal and a dragon.

The dragon parent of a half-dragon tends to be male, although female dragons have been known to take mortal lovers and give birth to half-dragon children, particularly good female dragons who have assumed mortal form to be with a beloved partner. Male dragons often do not reveal their true nature to their mortal partners until their child is born with clear signs of draconic heritage. Then the dragon might reveal the truth and take the child for its own purposes. Other dragons (particularly chromatics) abandon both mother and child, or at least appear to, sometimes watching their progeny from afar and subtly manipulating events to suit their plans.

A Life Apart

Half-dragons are clearly a breed apart from their humanoid parent. They are born with scaly skin the color of their dragon parent, reptilian eyes, sharp teeth, and claws on their fingers and toes. They tend to have elongated, sinuous features and pointed ears. Although some find half-dragons strangely exotic, many humanoids find them hideous, leading some mortals to abandon half-dragon children. These poor souls are either taken in by others or must survive in the wilderness alone. Many of them die.

Those half-dragons that survive are faced with a lonely and difficult life. Even if they have the acceptance of their mortal parent or guardians, half-dragons rarely find open acceptance in humanoid societies. They are feared and shunned for their strange appearance, mistrusted and often considered cursed or bringers of bad luck. They lead lives of isolation except for the few people able to see past their physical appearance and relate to the person inside.

Ironically, half-dragons find more acceptance, or at least fearful respect, among humanoid cultures, particularly those of a reptilian nature like kobolds or lizardfolk. There a half-dragon's reptilian characteristics are not as unusual, and they might even be considered beautiful. The half-dragon's potential power is also feared and respected by such communities, although this might lead some evil humanoids to kill a half-dragon out of fear of its power. Half-dragons can rise to positions of great influence among these savage tribes, and many become leaders, even establishing ruling dynasties. Many kobold tribes claim to trace their ancestry back to a legendary half-dragon ruler.

In rare cases, the dragon parent raises the half-dragon. Half-dragons in this situation tend to have more acceptance but are still looked down upon by true dragons. Dragon parents tend to be distant toward their offspring, allowing them to be raised by servants, and the cruelty of a half-dragon's full-blooded dragon siblings can be terrible to behold. Half-dragons raised by their dragon parent are also even more isolated from society, making it difficult for them to interact with other humanoids.

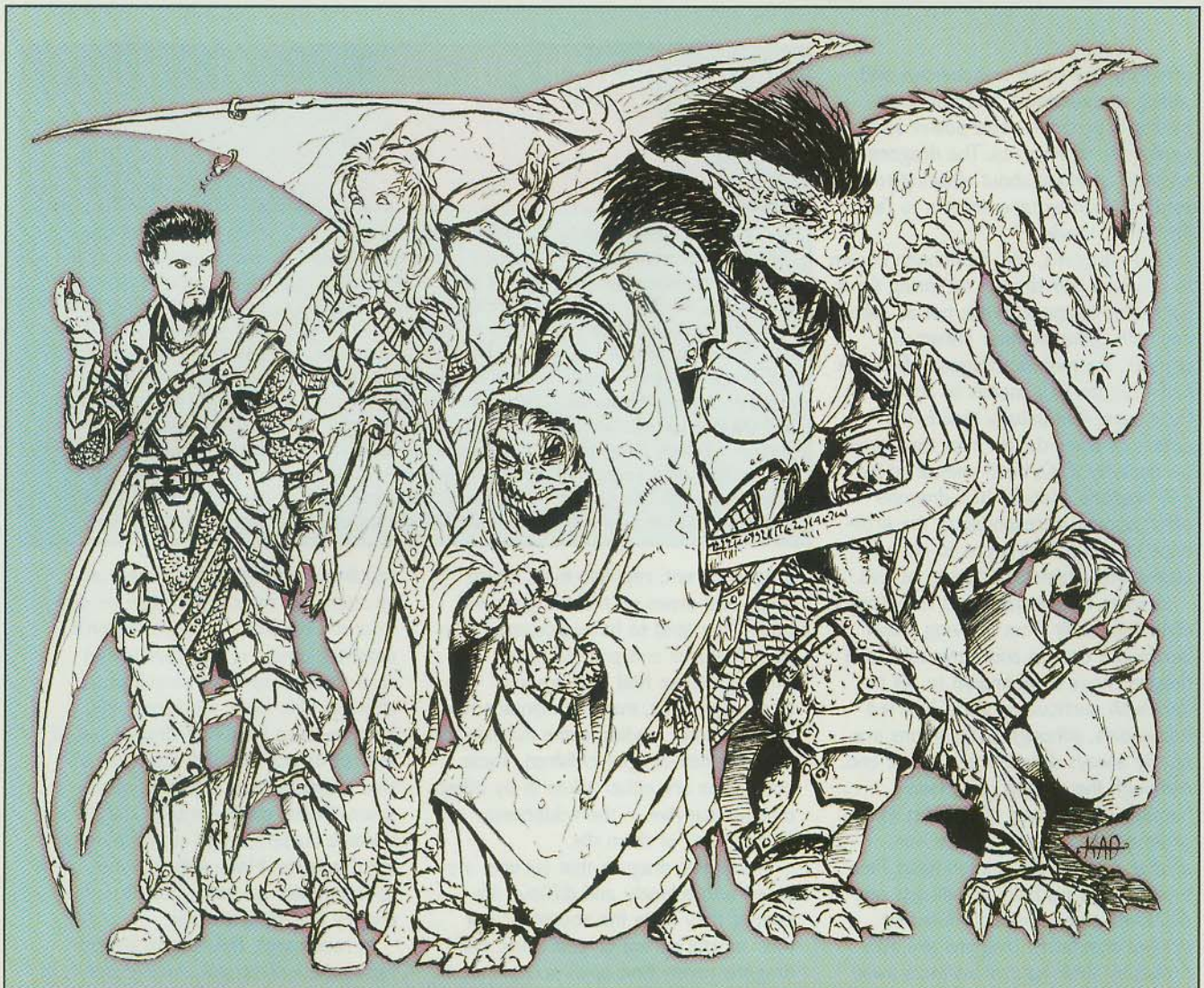
MASTERS OF THEIR FATE

Although half-dragons are born to either chromatic or metallic dragons, the alignment of their dragon parent does not necessarily dictate a half-dragon's eventual alignment. As thinking creatures, half-dragons can choose their own beliefs, based in part on how they were raised and taught. Chromatic half-dragons have a natural propensity toward evil and metallic half-dragons toward good, but that does not make their eventual alignment a foregone conclusion.

Half-dragons raised by their dragon parent (or the dragon's servants) tend to adopt the parent's alignment. But a half-dragon raised in humanoid society might adopt a completely different alignment. Outcasts from society, half-dragons often favor neutrality or chaos over law, and some half dragons reject good and evil and adopt a more dispassionate, neutral view. A chromatic half-dragon raised by a good and kind mortal might grow up to be good, while a metallic half-dragon tormented and treated cruelly might turn to evil out of bitterness.

HALF-DRAGON CHARACTERS

Dungeon Masters should use caution when allowing half-dragons as player characters, since they are more powerful than other player character races. Using the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* half-dragon characters should be treated as if they were three levels higher than their class level (having three starting "monster levels"). Thus a 1st-level half-dragon character is equivalent to a 4th-level character from a standard PC race. If the half-dragon's non-dragon parent is not one of the standard PC races, the character's monster levels might need to be increased. For example, a half-dragon (+3 levels) half-lizardfolk (+2 levels), has a total of 5 monster levels, and a half-dragon/half-ogre would be a truly formidable character (+8 monster levels)!



Any corporeal creature can have the half-dragon template, as described in Appendix 3 of the Monster Manual. *Human-dragon crossbreeds are the most common, but they range widely.*

The Other Half

Dragons intermingle with different humanoid races for different reasons, and the various races each treat half-dragons in their own particular way.

Humans: The most common humanoid mates of dragons are humans, perhaps because their natural adaptability helps them deal with the unique challenges of half-dragon offspring, perhaps because dragons are drawn to human vitality and energy, or simply because humans are so plentiful. Half-human half-dragons can come from nearly any kind of dragon and be found in nearly any human society. Since human lands often include many different non-human races, a half-dragon might be able to find a greater measure of acceptance, although life is still difficult for them.

Dwarves: Half-dwarf half-dragons tend to have red, copper, or silver dragon parents, but blue or gold are not unheard of. They might find life difficult in the clannish and tradition-bound dwarfholds and tend to adopt lives of wandering or isolation. Red and gold half-dragons find their immunity to fire useful in dwarven communities and can become skilled crafters and artificers, provided they can find suitable teachers.

Elves: Dragons are drawn to elves because of their long lives and magical natures, but elf-dragon unions are rarely happy ones, and the products of these unions might have a difficult time in elven society. Even more than half-elves of human heritage, half-elves of draconic parentage feel like outsiders in elven culture. They are more than capable of learning the intricacies of elven life—a little too capable, in fact. Their greater intelligence and magical gifts sometimes make half-dragons the targets of jealousy, while their appearance is not up to elven standards of beauty. Half-elf half-dragons tend to abandon elven society after a time to strike out on their own. The most common dragons to breed with elves are green and copper dragons, along with the occasional black, silver, or gold dragon.

Gnomes: Gnome half-dragons are a rarity but actually find a great deal of acceptance in gnome society, which values children of any race. A half-gnome half-dragon might be subject to some pranks from time to time, but they tend to develop a better sense of humor about themselves and the rest of the world. Their gnome parents also encourage their natural magical talents. The main source of prejudice against half-dragons among gnomes is their resemblance to kobolds, and some gnomes shun them because of it. Half-gnome half-dragons are typically

KIANNA FIREMANE

Female Half-dragon (red)/Half-human, 4th-level Paladin/2nd-level Sorcerer

Strength	20 (+5)	Fort. Save	+10	Armor Class	24
Dexterity	13 (+1)	Ref. Save	+6	Flat-footed AC	23
Constitution	15 (+2)	Will Save	+9	Touch AC	11
Intelligence	13 (+1)	Alignment	LG		
Wisdom	13 (+1)	Speed	20 ft.		
Charisma	19 (+4)	Size	M (6 ft.)		
Hit Points	52	Melee Attack	+12	Ranged Attack	+6

Special: +4 natural armor; bite (1d6+5); claw (1d4+5); breath weapon (cone of fire, 6d10, DC 19); immune to fire, *sleep,* and paralysis effects; 60-foot darkvision and low-light vision; proficient with all martial weapons, armor, and shields; *detect evil;* divine grace; *lay on hands;* divine health; aura of courage; smite evil; *remove disease;* turn undead.

Skills: Climb +3, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Ride +6, Spellcraft +5.

Feats: Cleave, Combat Casting, Power Attack, Toughness.

Languages: Common, Draconic.

Possessions: *+2 longsword, +1 large metal shield,* dagger, masterwork half-plate armor.

Arcane Spells Known (6/5; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect poison, disrupt undead, light, mending, read magic;* 1st—*mount, true strike.*

Divine Spells Prepared (1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 1st—*protection from evil.*

Kianna's father is a red dragon who seduced her mother, a noblewoman, as part of a plot against her kingdom. Kianna was raised in fosterage, considering her birth cursed from the very beginning, and hating her inhuman father. She learned to use her innate magical abilities a bit when she was young, but she found herself drawn to proving herself by fighting against evilcreatures such as her father. She found comfort in prayer and faith and eventually devoted herself to the service of Pelor as a paladin, a mysterious knight whose face was never seen, always wore full armor, and was identified only by the symbol of a dragon on her shield. Tales of the "dragon lady" have spread, and in time Kianna plans to seek out her father, learn more about him, and eventually destroy him.

ARISKULL

Male Half-dragon (black)/Half-lizardfolk, 5th-level Druid/1st-level Sorcerer

Strength	22 (+6)	Fort. Save	+4	Armor Class	23
Dexterity	12 (+1)	Ref. Save	+1	Flat-footed AC	22
Constitution	16 (+3)	Will Save	+6	Touch AC	11
Intelligence	11 (+0)	Alignment	NE		
Wisdom	16 (+3)	Speed	20 ft.		
Charisma	14 (+2)	Size	M (6 ft.)		
Hit Points	62	Melee Attack	+10	Ranged Attack	+4

Special: +9 natural armor; bite (1d6+6); claw (1d4+6); breath weapon (line of acid, 6d4, DC 17); immune to acid, *sleep,* and paralysis effects; 60-foot darkvision and low-light vision; +4 to Jump, Swim, and Balance checks; proficient with all simple weapons plus longspear and scimitar; proficient with light and medium armor and shields; nature sense; animal companion; woodland stride; trackless step; resist nature's lure; *wild shape* (1/day).

Skills: Balance +2, Concentration +7, Jump +8, Wilderness Lore +7, Handle Animal +6, Listen +6, Spot +6, Spellcraft +4, Swim +5.

Feats: Cleave, Maximize Spell, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Languages: Draconic.

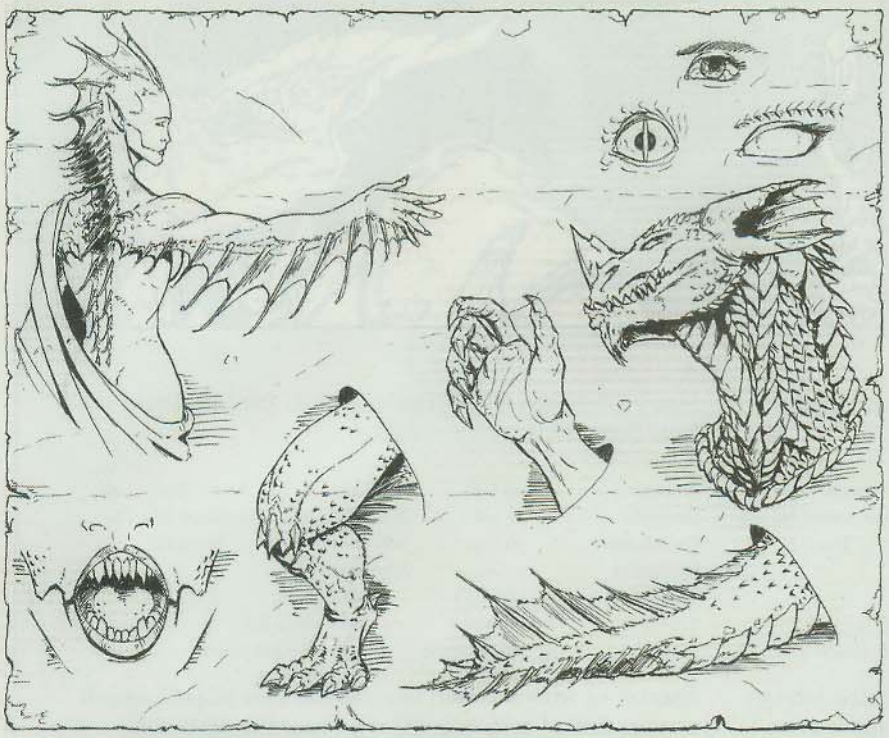
Possessions: *+1 greatclub, 3 javelins of lightning,* hide armor, shell necklace.

Arcane Spells Known (5/4; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, light, ghost sound, mage hand;* 1st—*obscuring mist, protection from good.*

Divine Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, flare, know direction, purify food and drink;* 1st—*cure light wounds, endure elements, magic fang, summon nature's ally I;* 2nd—*charm person or animal, summon swarm, wood shape;* 3rd—*contagion, cure moderate wounds.*

Ariskull is a tall, powerfully muscled lizardman with glossy black scales and a skull-like face. His scales have a pattern of dark green markings across the back and along his tail. His birth came about as part of a pact between a black dragon and the chief of a lizardfolk tribe. Years later, Ariskull appeared to challenge his father for leadership of the tribe, killing him in single combat. He then began leading his tribe on raids outside their marshland home, striking terror into the surrounding lands, all the while seeking certain treasures and bringing humanoid slaves back to his mother's lair in the depths of the swamp. He doesn't know all of her plans, only that he will rule as her second-in-command, provided he does nothing to displease her.

Ariskull is accompanied almost everywhere by his animal companion, a giant crocodile (see the *Monster Manual,* page 195), which he sometimes uses as a mount.



The appearance of half-dragons always betrays their mixed heritage to some degree. Some merely have fangs and claws, while others have more draconian features.

born to brass, bronze, or copper dragons.

Halflings: Halfling half-dragons are among the most rare, and they are nearly always a product of true love between a dragon and a halfling, meaning they are usually born to metallic dragons. Such children have the benefit of at least one loving parent (if not two), along with the opportunities affording by a tight-knit halfling community. Living as they do among other races, halflings are used to the role of outsider, and halfling half-dragons benefit from this as well.

Savage Humanoids: Half-dragons among the savage humanoid races like goblins, hobgoblins, orcs, kobolds, lizardfolk, and the like are generally chromatic (although lizardfolk half-dragons are just as often metallic, usually bronze). If they survive childhood, these half-dragons quickly rise to places of power within the tribes using their superior physical and mental abilities.

The Dragon's Gifts

What do half-dragons gain in exchange for their lives as social outcasts, belonging to no particular culture? They gain power, which is sometimes cold comfort, but power helps ensure their survival.

Half-dragons are stronger, tougher, and smarter than other humanoids, and they're gifted with forceful personalities, partly from their draconic heritage and partially from the demands of their upbringing. They're hardier than their humanoid cousins, gifted with natural armor and weapons in the form of their scales, teeth, and claws. They develop a breath weapon at maturity similar to that of their dragon parent along with immunity to certain attacks.

The True Art

Magic is in a half-dragon's blood, and all half-dragons have the potential to learn how to cast arcane spells and become powerful sorcerers. More importantly, they do not require tutoring or extensive training in magic; spellcasting seems to come naturally to them, and many half-dragon spellcasters are self-taught (usually by necessity). With dragon-like fervor, half-dragons often latch on to sorcery as a means of expressing themselves and exploring their heritage. They delight in learning new spells and applications of their magical powers.

On Faith & Religion

Although metallic and chromatic dragons respectively acknowledge either Bahamut or Tiamat as the ultimate among their kind, the mortal concepts of worship and religion are foreign to them. Half-dragons raised by their dragon parent tend to adopt this attitude, making them disinterested in religion in general.

Half-dragons raised in mortal society can be as devout as anyone else. Half-dragons sometimes find succor from the burden of being different from others in their faith, and some half-dragons are even raised by temples and monasteries as foundlings or at the request of their parents. Good and neutral religions teach half-dragons tolerance and understanding, while evil religions teach them to value the power inherent in their nature, and to use it for their own benefit. Some half-dragons turn to religion seeking understanding and acceptance, while others turn to evil religions seeking power and purpose in the world.

Carrying On the Line

It is difficult for a half-dragon to find love in the world, but half-dragons do create families of their own, passing on their draconic blood to future generations. According to some legends, all sorcerers can thank a half-dragon ancestor somewhere in their past for their unique magical gifts—the only part of a half-dragon's legacy that survives past the first generation or so of intermingling with mortals.

Some half-dragons found influential bloodlines, creating ruling dynasties based around the strength of draconic blood. This is particularly true among the savage humanoids, where there are still tribes of kobolds, lizardfolk, and others ruled by clans of sorcerers descended from a distant half-dragon ancestor that first united the tribe with his powers.

As sorcerers know, even a touch of dragon blood can be enough to make one different and strange. Dragon blood has been known to skip generations in a bloodline, particularly as they grow further from their dragon ancestor. Someone touched by the blood of dragons might appear in a family that has forgotten about (or hidden) that particular aspect of their heritage.

STAR WARS® INSIDER

Every other month, *STAR WARS INSIDER* takes you behind the scenes of the thrilling *STAR WARS* saga. Subscribe NOW to get the magazine and become a *STAR WARS* Fan Club member. It's your "backstage pass" to meet the actors and the people behind the camera who bring the *STAR WARS* films to life!

© 2001 Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM

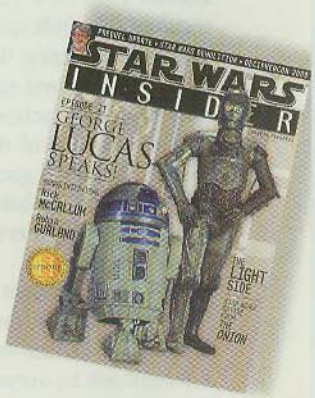
You Get:

- Episode II coverage
- Interviews with *STAR WARS* stars and behind-the-scenes pros
- Game and book previews
- Latest film news and updates
- Jawa Trader collectible toy catalog

Subscribe Today and Save 45%

2-1B
Famed Medical Droid

ROGER ROGER SIGN ME UP NOW.



☐ 6 issues of ***Star Wars Insider***
Only $19.95—45% off the cover price!
(only $25.95 Canadian!)
Includes a 1 year membership in the *STAR WARS* Fan Club

☐ 12 issues of ***Star Wars Insider***
Only $34.95—51% off the cover price!
(only $46.95 Canadian!)
Includes a 2 year membership in the *STAR WARS* Fan Club

☐ Check Enclosed **(US funds only)** ☐ Bill Me

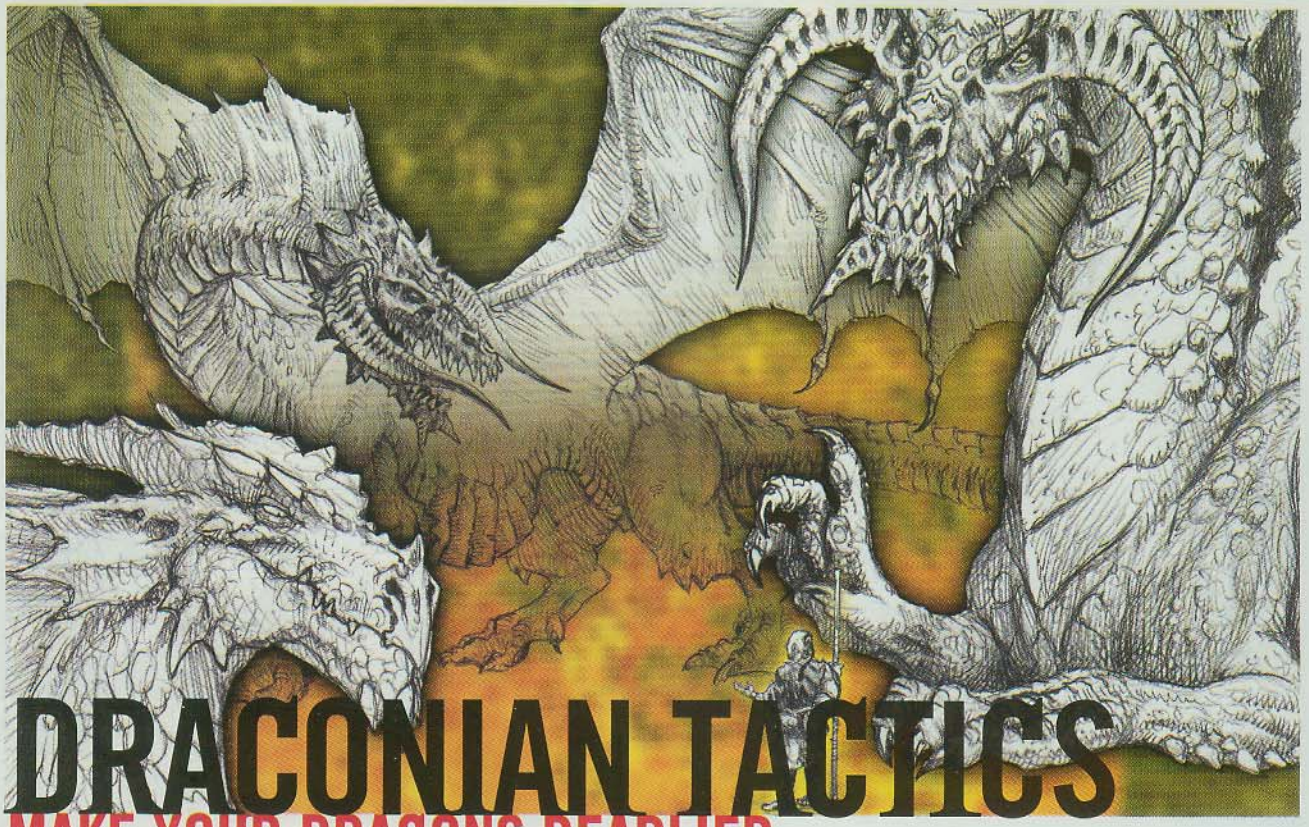
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/ Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 469078, ESCONDIDO, CA 92046-9078



DRACONIAN TACTICS

MAKE YOUR DRAGONS DEADLIER

by Jesse Decker • dragon drawings by Todd Lockwood

Nothing typifies high adventure more than an encounter with a dragon. No other monster evokes such a powerful response from players, and no other monster demands such careful play on the part of the DM. Dragons, for all their size and magical abilities, are fearsome foes because they are smart—adult and older dragons are smarter than most PCs. This intelligence requires that DMs use dragons judiciously, maximizing the power of a dragon's spells and special abilities. This article outlines tactics and strategies common to each of the evil dragon species. Although good dragons are similarly canny in battle, the majority of combat encounters occur against evil dragons.

Although confident, even arrogant, about their power, dragons prepare for battle. Their senses make it unlikely that a dragon will be surprised in any event, but they use magic or servants to alert them of intruders in their lair. They hunt at night, making it difficult to catch a dragon on the wing, and they use their superior movement abilities to control the pace and location of combat.

General Dragon Tactics

Full Attack: Adventurers rightfully fear a dragon's full attack. Dragons of Medium-size or larger can often make five or six attacks if given the chance. Spells like *invisibility* allow them to get close enough to deliver all their attacks.

Keep Away: Dragons know that their powerful melee abilities won't be enough to overcome all foes. When facing strong or numerous foes, or those mobile enough to avoid the dragon's full attack, dragons use their great speed to control the battle. The dragon launches a breath weapon attack against as many targets as possible and then flies out of reach. Dragons with alternate movement abilities like swim or burrow often use them to the same end.

Concentrated Attacks: Dragons are smart enough to fear the offensive power of wizards and sorcerers, and they know how poorly a wizard or sorcerer fares in melee combat. They almost always try to engage the spellcasters first. Furthermore, without healing abilities of their own, dragons know that they cannot continue a battle if a group's priest provides constant healing support, so dragons either seek to eliminate priests early in the combat, or make sure that they focus their attacks on one foe rather than weakening several.

Feats: The list of dragon feats in the *Monster Manual* gives dragons some powerful options. Both Hover and Flyby Attack make it more likely that a dragon is able to attack its foes without being attacked in turn, and they are therefore great choices. Snatch is a powerful choice for dragons who prefer to face foes in the open—if the dragon can grab one attacker and isolate it from its companions, it's almost guaranteed victory.

Minions: Through spells, spell-like abilities, the Leadership feat, or the simple use of skills like Diplomacy and Intimidate, dragons have excellent means to acquire followers and allies. No matter how much power an individual dragon has, it knows that having minions to gather information, provide assistance in combat, or provide healing could easily mean the difference between adding to its horde or becoming some adventurer's trophy.

Spells

Magic Missile: Although not as damaging as the dragon's other attack forms, this is one of the best options for harrying groups with good ranged attacks. It's also a useful tool for running battles against other swift fliers.

Resist Elements: Dragons all have a subtype, making some of them especially vulnerable to some forms of energy-based attacks. Dragons will always take measures to shore up this weakness.

Alarm: Dragons know that they can outfly almost any other creature, and are therefore at their most vulnerable when resting in their lairs. *Alarm* is an easy way for spellcasting dragons to monitor the entrance to their lairs.

Haste: The power of a dragon's full attack has already been discussed. *Haste,* in addition to a great armor class bonus, allows the dragon a much better chance of taking a full attack each round.

WHITE DRAGONS

White dragons revel in frigid conditions that others find intolerable. Although this might seem like an advantage, white dragons often find that those they encounter already have some magical protection against the cold. They combat this by making the other difficulties inherent in arctic terrain, like poor visibility, slow movement rates, and few options to find food, work against their foes.

White dragons in the open favor hit-and-run tactics, often striking at supplies or beasts of burden, attempting to destroy a group's means of surviving in the cold rather than bother facing the group's main combatants. The dragon then follows from a distance, picking off stragglers, facing the entire group only after it has been weakened by exposure or split up.

A white dragon doesn't react with much sophistication until it has reached Adult age or more. As the *Monster Manual* states, "most white dragons are simply animalistic predators." Despite their straightforward tactics, white dragons that live a long time do so because they have successfully avoided powerful foes. These cautious white dragons favor Flyby Attack and Snatch. Swift fliers even among dragonkind, white dragons are also the most likely to flee a confrontation, trusting their wings to carry them away from danger.

White dragons of any age try to take as much advantage of their icewalking ability as possible, attempting to lure foes onto patches of ice. They become much more willing to engage in melee combat if their opponents are slowed by having to move across such a slippery surface. Old dragons can often use their *freezing fog* ability to make foes slip on areas where they would normally have firm purchase. A simple *gust of wind* can then cause those who succeed in standing to make another save or fall.

White dragons can also burrow, giving them an easy way to set up impromptu ambushes. One popular tactic involves digging all of the snow out from underneath a thin sheet of ice and waiting for prey to walk over it. When the victim crashes through the ice, the dragon gets a quick meal.

Lairs: White dragons, aware that they lack size and magical ability when compared to other dragon types, prefer to attack from ambush. They choose lairs in deep glacial crevasses, high up on sheer ice cliffs, or just under frozen mountain tops. No dragon lair is readily accessible, but white dragons are more likely than most to ensure that a difficult climb or tricky flying is required to enter their homes.

Spells: *Burning hands, flaming sphere,* and *fireball* are often chosen by white dragons. Few adventuring groups think to prepare against fire attacks when dealing with white dragons, so they often learn such spells as a surprise tactic. *Grease* allows white dragons to take advantage of the slow speeds most creatures have in arctic terrain—if movement rates are slowed enough, a *grease* spell might split a party of adventurers into groups small enough to finish off. White dragons also use *spider climb* to great effect by hiding just below the lip of a steep, narrow glacial crevasse and ambushing travelers.

TEMPLATES

Dragons are nasty, but their abilities are well known to most experienced gamers. One particularly nasty way to surprise the players is by adding a template. The fiendish, ghost, half-fiend, and beast of Xvim (from *Monsters of Faerûn*) can all be applied to dragons. Try to choose templates that shore up an existing weakness. For example, most adventurers know of a white dragon's vulnerability to fire-based attacks. Add the fiendish template, and suddenly the players have to think on their feet—*fireball* isn't going to take the dragon down.

BLACK DRAGONS

The swamp is a black dragon's greatest ally and most powerful weapon. In the swamp, black dragons can use their abilities to swim and fly to control almost any combat. They simply stay away from their foes, usually by ducking under the murky water, resurfacing, and then attacking with their breath weapon. In their swampy homes, black dragons have the best chance of using the "keep away" tactic discussed in the sidebar. Many black dragons take ranks in Move Silently and Hide.

Once they've seen an intruder in their territory, black dragons of Adult age or older use their *corrupt water* ability to spoil any potions the party is carrying, remaining unseen if possible. In the unlikely event that there's a clear choice, black dragons always choose to include the character carrying the most healing potions in the *corrupt water* area. Of course, if there's a chance of being seen, the dragon knows that its breath weapon is probably more

NOW YOU SEE ME . . . (VARIANT RULE)

Black dragons, like other big creatures, suffer stiff penalties to Hide checks. This variant rule allows such creatures with large portions of their bodies totally out of sight (like a submerged black dragon lifting only its head out of the water) to make Hide checks with a circumstance bonus equal to the AC bonus the creature would be granted for cover. Thus a Huge black dragon with nothing but it's head and neck above murky water (three-quarters cover) would get a +7 circumstance bonus to its Hide skill check. This nearly cancels out the dragon's -8 size penalty. If the dragon were to have all but its eyes and the top of its head submerged (nine-tenths cover), it would receive a +10 circumstance bonus.

CLASS LEVELS

Most intelligent monsters can gain class levels, and dragons are no exception. Here's a quick rundown of what each class adds to a dragon's long list of abilities.

Barbarian: A raging dragon is not a pretty sight. While the dragon might sacrifice some if its more sophisticated tactics, it smashes things even faster when enraged. Any class that offers uncanny dodge helps.

Bard: A good dragon with bard levels would make an interesting NPC, but the last thing serious-minded heroes want in an epic fight is for the dragon to start singing.

Cleric: Perhaps the best class for dragons, cleric levels offer a dragon the one thing its innate abilities can't give it: healing.

Druid: Druid levels are a good way for green or black dragons to exert more control over their habitats, but they don't fit many other species.

Fighter: A dragon with more feats and a better attack bonus is just mean. A proper selection of feats could make a dragon with a few fighter levels nearly unstoppable.

Monk: The unarmed damage and unarmed attack bonus of a monk don't stack with a monster's natural attacks, so monk levels aren't really a good choice—the fact that dragons can already fly reduces the utility of many of the monk's special abilities.

Paladin: A good dragon with paladin levels and the celestial template could crush entire armies of evil, or work as a powerful behind-the-scenes force for good.

Ranger: Like the monk, the ranger's special abilities mesh poorly with a dragon's innate powers.

Rogue: Sneak attack. Move Silently. Hide. A dragon with levels in rogue will almost always kill the first PC it attacks—be very careful with this one.

Sorcerer: Dragons are already powerful spellcasters, but it isn't hard to imagine them taking sorcerer levels to increase their spellcasting ability.

Wizard: Dragons have a hard time manipulating most spellbooks, but one might take levels of the wizard class to learn from spellbooks it has collected or to get item creation feats.

dangerous in a short-term confrontation than any of its spell-like abilities.

Masters of ambush, black dragons love it when their foes are surrounded in *darkness.* However, they know that adventurers see any field of *darkness* as a signal that an attack is eminent, so black dragons save their *darkness* ability until they can cover those who'll have a hard time getting out of it—heavily armored warriors trudging through muddy water are prime candidates.

Once combat is joined, black dragons try to force non-swimming foes into the water. Improved Bull Rush is a favorite, and dragons have the size and strength to plunge just about any foe into the swamp. They also love attacking from beneath boats or water-walking foes, preventing most of their opponents from returning an attack.

Lairs: Just as the swamp aids a black dragon in combat, so too does it provide for secure lairs. By using caves with submerged entrances, black dragons slow and hinder anyone trying to enter their homes. Rather than relying on minions or even its own keen senses, a black dragon almost always chooses to use the natural hazards of the swamp as a first line of defense. Wherever possible, the dragon will use obstacles like clogged waterways, uncertain footing, and dense foliage to slow foes and make their journey as noisy as possible, providing more opportunities to set an ambush.

Spells: A black dragon's love of ambush extends to its spell selection. Black dragons favor *invisibility* for obvious reasons. Many employ *alarm* as a means of detecting possible prey and often cast the spell well away from their lairs. Once the *alarm* is triggered, the dragon swims underwater to ambush its foes.

GREEN DRAGONS

Dragons in forested areas usually try to fight outside their lairs despite their size. Their high movement rates and keen senses make them especially dangerous when dodging in and out of trees. Green dragons, however, are the most direct of all evil dragons, preferring aggressive attacks and frontal assaults to the hit-and-run tactics that other dragons employ. If given the opportunity, green dragons will stand toe-to-toe with the strongest fighters in the group and then move on to weaker party members.

Of all the evil dragons, green dragons have the most powerful *suggestion* and *dominate* abilities. They seldom choose to use these powers when confronted with a group of foes. Instead, they use them on solitary foes to gain information, often using their influence over the victim to lure other prey into the area.

Although they give in to their aggressive tendencies often, green dragons are highly intelligent. If presented with powerful opponents, they still prefer a frontal assault, but they use their magic to heighten their own abilities before the confrontation.

Lairs: Many adventurers are familiar with a green dragon's preference for forest lairs, but most forget their affinity for water. Green dragons, when given the opportunity, will live under a forest lake, making it much more difficult for potential foes to find the lair. A green dragon's aggressive nature makes it unlikely that it will allow intruders to attack it in its lair—it's much more likely to initiate a confrontation outside than most dragons. However, should an intruder make it into the lair without alerting its inhabitant, the green dragon invariably responds with a charge.

Spells: Since they cast spells as sorcerers, green dragons have little access to spells that affect the forested environs they call home. Therefore, green dragons prefer direct, offensive spells. Green dragons often begin a confrontation with a long range *ice storm* or *lightning bolt* followed up by a breath weapon attack on the next round. Beyond offensive choices, green dragons favor spells that protect them in the close combat that they prefer. Spells like *shield, blur, mage armor,* and *displacement* are all favorites.

BLUE DRAGONS

Blue dragon tactics are very similar to those of white dragons. Larger and more powerful than white dragons, blue dragons are more likely to engage in a straightforward battle, but their movement and illusion powers make it easy for them to surprise powerful foes. As the *Monster Manual* points out, blue dragons initiate combat in open ground by attacking from high overhead or with a surprise attack from under the

desert sands.

All blue dragons have the ability to *destroy water,* an especially dangerous ability in the desert terrain that they favor. When faced with particularly strong opposition, blue dragons attempt to remain hidden and destroy their foes' water supply from afar. They often extend such tactics to include quick raids focused on scattering a group's supplies in the sand.

Blue dragons have more sophisticated illusion powers than other evil dragons, and they take full advantage of their desert surroundings when using them. Even the simple sound imitation ability benefits from desert terrain—the dragon simply hides behind or beneath a sand dune and calls to a night watchman using a friend's voice. More powerful illusions, such as *hallucinatory terrain,* often form the key part of an older blue dragon's ambush plans.

Lairs: The *Monster Manual* describes blue dragon lairs as vast underground caverns. The most important detail of a blue dragon's lair, however, is how far away from water it is. Blue dragons, with their terrific overland movement rates, often live deep within their desert homes, and less mobile species must overcome great environmental obstacles to get to the dragon's lair.

Spells: Blue dragons favor illusion spells that aid them in combat, such as *invisibility, mirror image,* and *displacement.* They also make good use of other illusion spells, capitalizing on the changing nature of desert terrain. More than one blue dragon has lured a group of travelers into an ambush with an illusion of a small oasis.

RED DRAGONS

Confident in their own abilities, red dragons prepare a few basic strategies in advance and leave more complex strategies to weaker dragons. For all of their arrogance, the contingency plans that they devise are often quite cunning. A red dragon will seldom lack for an escape plan, and they are always quick to reappraise a foe once combat is joined. The basic plans that red dragons devise before entering combat usually follow three basic patterns.

The first is a straightforward attack. Red dragons, because of their great size, prefer to swoop down on their prey and initiate combat with a crush attack, attacking any obvious spellcasters; or failing that, they attack whomever appears to be the leader.

On the rare occasions when a red dragon confronts obviously wealthy prey, it usually prefers to use the Diplomacy and Intimidate skills, or enchantment spells, to take the prey's wealth with as little trouble as possible. Those who try to resist the dragon's demands are attacked or forced to carry their own equipment to the dragon's lair and leave it there as tribute.

The final tactic is the most cautious of the three and is rarely used. When a red dragon sees a small, well-armed group (adventurers), it attempts to strike from hiding with its breath weapon. Rather than attempting to destroy the group, this attack is meant to test how the dragon's foes react to a fire-based attack. If the group seems prepared for the attack, the dragon withdraws to devise another strategy, perhaps sending *dominated* or *charmed* servants to strike at the adventurers before following with its own melee attacks. If the group seems vulnerable to the breath weapon, the dragon usually chooses to use the negotiation plan described above.

Red dragons know that they have the most devastating breath weapon among evil dragons, but their love of treasure means that they often choose not to use it, preferring to leave their prey's treasure intact.

Lairs: The underground lairs of red dragons can give even powerful groups of adventurers pause—the extreme heat found in the lair can easily deplete the group's ability to protect from fire damage before they fight the dragon. Red dragons take full advantage of their immunity to fire, leaving few if any routes to their innermost caverns free of environmental hazards.

Spells: Powerful spellcasters, red dragons favor direct combat spells using forms of energy other than fire; *cone of cold* is often part of a red dragon's repertoire. In addition, red dragons love imposing their wills on others through magic. The often use *charm person* and other enchantments to supplement their innate *suggestion* ability.

DRAGONS IN YOUR GAME

Dragons have lots of attacks, spells, and spell-like abilities. Rather than flip pages in a published adventure or in the *Monster Manual,* prepare a quick cribsheet that lists all of the dragon's pertinent combat abilities, damage, and spells.

Name: _____
Color: _____
Age: _____
Size: _____
Alignment: _____
CR: _____

Speed: _____
Flying Speed: _____
Burrow/Swim Speed: _____
Hit Points: _____
AC: _____
SR: _____
Damage Reduction: _____

Saving Throws
Fortitude: _____
Reflex: _____
Will: _____

Abilities
Strength: _____
Dexterity: _____
Constitution: _____
Intelligence: _____
Wisdom: _____
Charisma: _____

Frightful Presence
Range: _____
Will DC: _____

Breath Weapon
Type: _____
Range/Area: _____
Damage: _____
Save Type and DC: _____

Attacks
Attack Bonus/Damage
Bite: /
Claw: /
Wing: /
Tail: /
Crush: / (Reflex DC__)
Tail Sweep: / (Reflex DC__)

Feats: _____

Skills: _____

Spell-Like Abilities: _____

Spells per Level:
1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 —

Spells Known: _____

Equipment/Treasure: _____

DRAGONTONGUE
A DRACONIC LANGUAGE PRIMER

by Owen K. C. Stephens

Although rusting and dented, the iron doors still showed the dwarven workmanship common throughout this ancient hall. Vorelei placed one hand on the metal, feeling its heat.

Duncan placed a hand on her shoulder. "You ready for this?"

Vorelei nodded, looking past him at the others. "We try to talk to it first."

Brother Zachary nodded, as did Darius, Michael, and Heather behind him. Vorelei took a deep breath and called out.

"Versvesh darastrix charir, yth tuor renthisj martivir."

Zachary whispered to those around him, "She's telling it we want to talk and that we come in peace."

A moment of silence passed, then Duncan stepped forward as well.

"Yth majak aridarastrixcaex virlym clax sjek renthisj."

"He's offering the sword that was stolen, if it agrees to talk with us."

*A deep voice boomed behind the doors. "Wux irlym pothoc. *Majak* vethicaex ver gethrisj."*

Zachary shook his head. "It says to give it the sword and leave."

Vorelei shouted back to it. "Yth renthisj martivir. Wux thric vargach hurthi, yth majak aurix. Wux vargach, wux loreat."

"She's giving it an ultimatum—peace and money, or death."

*The deep voice roared, then shouted louder than before. "Majak *vethicaex* ver gethrisj. Sjek thric gethrisj, yth *vargach*. Wux *loreat*!"*

The massive doors opened, releasing a wave of heat. Vorelei drew her sword. Duncan cast a quick spell, as did Brother Zachary. Darius moved forward while Michael and Heather nocked arrows to their bows.

*Vorelei checked to see that her friends were ready, then charged in, shouting, "Wux kurik *okarthel*. Darastrix *loreat*!"*

The language of dragons is one of the oldest forms of communication. According to the wyrms, it is second only to the languages of the outsiders, and all mortal tongues are descended from it. Its script was likely created long after its spoken form was standardized, as dragons have less need to write than other races. Some scholars believe Draconic script might have been influenced by dwarven runes, but the wise don't express this opinion within hearing of a dragon.

Many reptilian races use crude versions of Draconic, including kobolds, lizardfolk, and troglodytes, and present this as proof of their kinship with dragons. It is equally likely that these races were once taught or enslaved by dragons, and it is even possible that they took Draconic for their own simply to make a claim to common ancestors. The Draconic script is also used when a written form is needed for the elemental languages of Auran and Ignan. Despite this, it is still difficult for someone who knows Draconic to learn the languages of air and fire creatures.

Slight variations exist in the Draconic that is used by the various kinds of chromatic dragons. These differences are similar to regional accents. They form no impediment to understanding, but they are sufficiently obvious for a native speaker to know whether someone learned to speak Draconic from a red or green dragon. The various metallic dragons have similar accents, but the chromatic dragons each have their own slight differences in pronunciation. In general, Draconic has not changed significantly for hundreds of years.

Draconic sounds harsh to most other creatures and includes numerous hard consonants and sibilants. It includes sounds that humans generally describe as hissing (sj, ss, and sv) as well as a noise that sounds a great deal like a beast clearing its throat (ach).

Words that modify other words are placed before or after the word they modify. The most important modifier is always placed before, and it might be placed directly after as well if additional emphasis on the modifier is desired. A speaker of Draconic who wanted to say a big, black, evil dragon was approaching, but wanted the fact that it was evil more than anything else might say, "Malsvir darastrix turalisj vutha gethrisj leirith" or even "Malsvir darastrix turalisj vutha malasvir gethrisj leirith."

Most Draconic words have emphasis placed on the first syllable. Important ideas are emphasized in spoken Draconic by stressing the beginning and end of the word. In the written form, important words are marked with a special symbol of six lines radiating outward, similar to a fireburst (*). This is most often done by dragons when referring to themselves. The dragon Karajix would pronounce his name KA-raj-IX, and it would be written *Karajix*. This emphasis is also sometimes used when commanding, threatening, warning, or making a point.

Draconic has no specific word for "my" or "mine," instead using several prefixes depending on the exact meaning. A physical object claimed as a possession by a dragon speaker would begin with "veth" or "vethi," an individual with a relationship to the dragon (such as a friend or relative) begins with "er" or "ethe," and all other forms of possessiveness are represented by putting "ar" or "ari" before a word. Thus for a dragon to say "my sword" or "the sword is mine" he need only say "vethicaex," and "arirlim" translates as "my enemy." When indicating possession by another, combine the name of the possessor with the object possessed into a single word that starts with "ar" or "ari."

DRACONIC LANGUAGE

DRACONIC	ENGLISH	PART OF SPEECH	DRACONIC	ENGLISH	PART OF SPEECH
svern	above	prep	persvek	in	prep
ghent	after	prep	usk	iron	adj
thrae	air	n-element	svent	kill	v
vur	and	conj	maekrix	leader	n
baeshra	animal	n-creature	arcaniss	magic	n
litrix	armor	n	sthyr	man	n
svent	arrow	n-weapon	throden	many	n-number
vignar	ash	n	rhyaex	meat	n-food
garurt	axe	n-weapon	verthicha	mountain	n-place
waeth	bag	n	ominak	name	n
vargach	battle	n	leirith	near	adj, adv
vorel	beautiful	adj	thurkear	night	n-time
aujir	bronze	n-wealth	thric	no	adv
ghoros	before	prep	thur	nor	conj
zara	behind	prep	ghontix	ogre	n-creature
vhir	below	prep	shafaer	on	prep
unsinti	beside	prep	ir	one	n-number
turalisj	big	adj	usv	or	conj
vutha	black	adj-color	ghik	orc	n-creature
valeij	bleed	v	martivir	peace	n
iejir	blood	n	thadarsh	pillage	v
ulhar	blue	adj-color	ux	platinum	n-wealth
vaex	bow	n-weapon	oposs	rain	n
valignat	burn	v	charir	red	adj-color
sveargith	bravery	n	ssifisv	rest	v
maurg	breed	v	sjir	scroll	n
durah	bribe	v	irthos	secret	adj, n
shar	but	conj	ocuir	see	v
waere	cave	n-place	sjach	shadow	n
athear	celestial	n-creature	orn	silver	n-wealth
ierikc	century	n-time	molik	skin (hide)	n
sunathaer	cleric	n	kurik	slaughter	v
gix	claw	n-weapon	kosj	small	adj
rach	copper	n-wealth	othokent	smart	adj
rhyvos	cow	n-food	zyak	so	adj, adv, conj
faessi	coward	adj	hysvear	soar	v
thurgix	crippled	adj	miirik	song	n
vaeri	dance	n, v	vorastrix	sorcerer	n
korth	danger	n	renthisj	speak	v
sverak	darkvision	n	ner	spear	n-weapon
kear	day	n-time	isk	star	n
loex	dead	adj	vyth	steel	adj
urathear	deity	n-creature	ternesj	stone	n
kothar	demon	n-creature	pok	stop	v
loreat	die	v	kepesk	storm	n
gixustrat	disembowel	v	versvesh	strong	adj
darastrix	dragon	n-creature	pothoc	stupid	adj
tundar	dwarf	n-creature	caex	sword	n-weapon
edar	earth	n-element	clax	take	v
vaecaesin	elf	n-creature	ukris	talk	v
levex	enchanted	adj	virlym	thief	n
irlym	enemy	adj, n	erekess	through	prep
malsvir	evil	adj	ekess	to	prep
sauriv	eye	n	earenk	tomorrow	n-time
karif	far	adj, adv	ossalur	travel	v
haurach	fate	n	rasvim	treasure	n-wealth
lauth	few	n-number	oth	tooth	n-weapon
ixen	fire	n-element	nurh	ugly	adj
osvith	flee	v	kaegro	undead	n-creature, adj
austrat	fly	v	onureth	under	prep
achthend	food	n	arux	valley	n-place
ihk	for	prep	vivex	victory	n
caesin	forest	n-place	tuor	want	v
hurthi	fortress	n-place	aryte	war	n
thurirl	friend	adj, n	hesjing	water	n-element
kethend	gem	n-wealth	yth	we	pron
majak	give	v	noach	wealth	n-wealth
terunt	gnome	n-creature	laraek	weapon	n
gethrisj	go	v	aussir	white	adj-color
aurix	gold	n-wealth	mrith	with	prep
bensvelk	good	adj	levethix	wizard	n
achuak	green	ady-color	aesthyr	woman	n
rauhiss	halfling	n-creature	grovisv	wood	n
jhank	hammer	n-weapon	eorikc	year	n-time
dartak	hate	n, v	yrev	yellow	adj-color
irisv	heal	v	axun	yes	adv
okarthel	home	n-place	sjerit	yet	adv
munthrek	human	n-creature	wux	you	pron
sjek	if	conj			

PIDGIN DRACONIC

Here are some sample sentences and their translations into Draconic. Note that since the list of vocabulary words is very limited, some substitutions have been made.

Mialee, talk to the ugly elf.
Mialee, ukris vaecaesin nurh.

The elf says the magic sword we want is in the lich's tomb.
Vaecaesin ner levex caex levex yth tuor persvek arikaegrowaere.

He'll take us to the mountain of the tomb if we pay him.
Vaecaesin tuor aurix clax yth ekess ariloexokarthel verthicha.

The cave is evil and dangerous. We should go.
Sauriv waere korth. Yth *gethrisj*.

Shut up you stupid coward! Get in there!
Thric ner, *pothoc* wux faessi. *Gethrisj* persvek.

Tordek, hit the orc with your axe.
Vargach ghik mrith aritordekgarunt

A red dragon! Scram!
Charir *darastrix*! *Osvith*!

Krusk is dead. He died with much bravery.
Krusk loex~ Loreat mrith *sveargith*.

Yeah, bad luck for him.
Axun malsvir arikruskhaurach.

Check out all this gold! Tomorrow we'll be kings!
Ocuir throden *aurix*. Earenk yth *maekrix*.

I am not a thief!
Thric virlym.

The secrets of the dragon's treasure are in this scroll.
Ardarastrixrasvim irthos persvek sjir.

Dragon's blood flows in a sorcerer.
Aridarastrixiejir gethrisj persvek vorastrix.

Please don't disembowel the dwarf.
Martivir thric gixustratt tundar.

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES

HOW TO DM A DRAGON

by Adam Kay • drawing by Todd Lockwood

Dragons are the most potent tool in a DM's monster arsenal. Every tavern has its favorite wyrm tale. After it is sung, the fools scoff, and cowards go looking for a new pair of pants.

Below are a few guidelines on how to use dragons to their greatest effect. Keep in mind that for the sake of the story, these rules are less important than an exciting game. Feel free to bend or break the rules below, but only in the name of drama.

1. Less is More

The cardinal rule when dealing with dragons is this: Less is more. The less a DM uses dragons, the more impact they have. Imagine that J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* opened with the Shire being strafed by a dragon. Then Bilbo joins up with the dwarves to set out to reclaim the treasure from Smaug, only to encounter all sorts of dragon signs along the way: footprints, eggs, scale armor, and sightings overhead. You could even replace Gollum with a little talking shadow dragon!

So what does the reader do when the most ferocious dragon is introduced? Yawn.

But Tolkien understood that less is more. Before reaching Smaug, Bilbo faces a book's worth of non-dragon opponents. When he finally gets a glimpse of the wyrm, the reader is trembling and sweating all over.

That is what dragons should do to your players.

2. Foreshadowing

Compare the following descriptions.

"A dragon flies over you."

"The trees are shaking violently in the sudden wind. Your horses are skittish and hard to control. The air is hot and full of dragons' stench."

Foreshadowing is a crucial part of DMing a dragon. Let the PCs stew in terror for as long as possible, escalating from one type of foreshadowing to another for contrast, then boom! In comes the main event.

There are four different types of foreshadowing:

- **Story:** The whole story can be centered around the foreshadowed element, as in *The Hobbit*. It isn't necessary for you to center the whole campaign around the dragon, but it would be good to have a few foreshadowing adventures.
- **Things:** Trees, weather, or anything that doesn't talk can be used to enhance a dragon experience. When the party comes across the remains of a dragon attack, you should describe the burnt houses and great furrows scraped into the ground in great detail. The height of this type of foreshadowing uses things that used to talk . . . like dead people.
- **People:** Rumors, conversation, and letters work well. This method is a great way to impart information about the dragon, especially if they find the letter on what remains of the courier who carried it.
- **The Dragon Itself.** Shadowed movement, growls, and dragon stench all fit in this category—and they should be used last. Remember to use all five senses. The PCs should smell the acrid, burning stench of the dragon on the wind. It's footsteps should make the ground tremble, and the PCs should see its claws crush stone as it walks. The dragon's roar should be painful to hear, and the PCs should be able to taste blood in their mouths as their gums bleed in reaction to the terror they behold. Every part of their beings should scream at them to flee as fast as they can.

One warning: Be careful not to mistake foreshadowing for the main event. The players can become so tense from expectation they fail to care anymore, yawning through long descriptions of thunder.

3. Describing the Dragon

When the dragon finally makes its grand entrance, modify the rule above: *More* is more. After being held in suspense with foreshadowing, the players expect (and deserve) a payoff. Use the most impressive, most terrifying details. Most description should come as the encounter begins, but throw in small details here and there to keep the image fresh. Don't skimp, and never cheat players by calling it "a white dragon." Instead, say, "the hide is a pearly, flashing white that reflects your torches so each scale seems to have a flickering drop of blood on it."

Unless it's a name developed in the course of the story, avoid naming your dragons. Anything that places the mysterious monster in a box is bad. Nothing upsets a DM more than putting heart and soul into a description and having the rules lawyer, who long ago memorized all this information, shout, "Ah, a white dragon! by the size I'd say it's an adult. It does 6d6 with the breath weapon. No problem, we're 12th level."

4. Attack Style

"Less is more" can also be applied to the breath weapon. Dragons should not breathe on PCs until there is no other alternative. The players know it's inevitable, so wait until they are visibly flinching.

A simple pause for a dragon to draw in the penultimate breath is all that's needed before the beast unleashes hell. Remember that the idea of dragon fire frightens people around the world, whether they play D&D or not. Use a dragon's breath weapon at the most crucial, dramatic moments.

One way to throw rules lawyers for a loop is have all dragons, even white, breathe fire. Dragons are a part of society's mythological consciousness, and it helps to tap into that.

Instead of relying on the breath weapon, dragons can bellow and shatter things, gore the foolhardy on their horns, and body slam houses. The more creative you are, the better. The entire creature is one huge weapon, so use its wings, tail, claws, teeth, and massive weight to the greatest effect.

When it comes to magic, spells cast by a dragon should be as deadly, impressive looking, and different as possible. Most dragons don't have schooling in the arcane arts. Their magic comes naturally. Describe their spells rather than using their names. Alter the spells' descriptions so that they seem more impressive. Perhaps the dragon just cast *lightning bolt,* but your players will be more impressed by the "wave of crackling white-hot energy" that sweeps across the room in a line.

5. Thinking like a dragon

Among the most important influences on a dragon's mind is its long life, and two important consequences of this are frequently overlooked.

• **The longer you live, the more cunning you become.** Even a very young dragon is probably older than the PCs. Imagine how savvy a grizzled old pirate might be, then multiply that by two.

Unless you're running a comedy campaign, dragons should never do anything stupid. If a dragon stumbles into an idiotic trap the mystique is gone. Worse, the dragon looks like a chump.

It can be hard to represent a creature that is supposed to be smarter than the DM. But there's a way out:

A WELL-PLAYED DRAGON

ALWAYS . . .	NEVER . . .
. . . looks out for number one.	. . . loses a game of chess.
. . . uses the home field advantage.	. . . knowingly shows weakness.
. . . acts like royalty.	. . . wastes its breath weapon.
. . . has an ace up its sleeve.	. . . makes stupid decisions
. . . speaks many languages.	. . . trusts anyone.
. . . uses its wings.	. . . forgets a slight
. . . looks for the hidden meaning.	. . . acts predictably.
. . . overestimates itself.	. . . fears a human threat.
. . . has an escape route.	. . . takes meaningless risks.
. . . is awesome to behold.	. . . acts on a whim.

Make the dragon smarter than the player's characters and it will seem ferocious indeed. The way to do this is old-fashioned planning. Work out a few tricks beforehand based on the party's playing style. In the heat of battle, make it look like the reptilian beast just came to a lightning fast, brilliant decision.

Dragons are feared for a reason. It should take everything the PCs have to defeat it—but defeat does not mean kill.

• **The longer you *might* live, the more careful you get.** To the dragon, everything pales compared with its own life. It doesn't make sense to die defending a treasure it only took a few hundred years to amass.

It's not every day that something can hurt a dragon—the first blow that does significant damage might even send young ones packing (bent on revenge, for sure). A dragon involved in a moderately important quest would probably run away when it was brought down to half its hit points, and only for a crucial quest (like defending its treasure) would it suffer to go below that.

A dragon should only fight to the death in remarkable circumstances. Below is a list of what could make these creatures embrace the bitter end.

• **The end of the world:** There's not much to live for after that.

• **Love:** Everything is permitted with this ancient motivation.

• **Defending their young:** Like many creatures, dragons are capable of incredible bravery and sacrifice when the lives of their young hang in the balance.

• **Nowhere to run:** A trapped dragon or one controlled by magic would be very angry indeed.

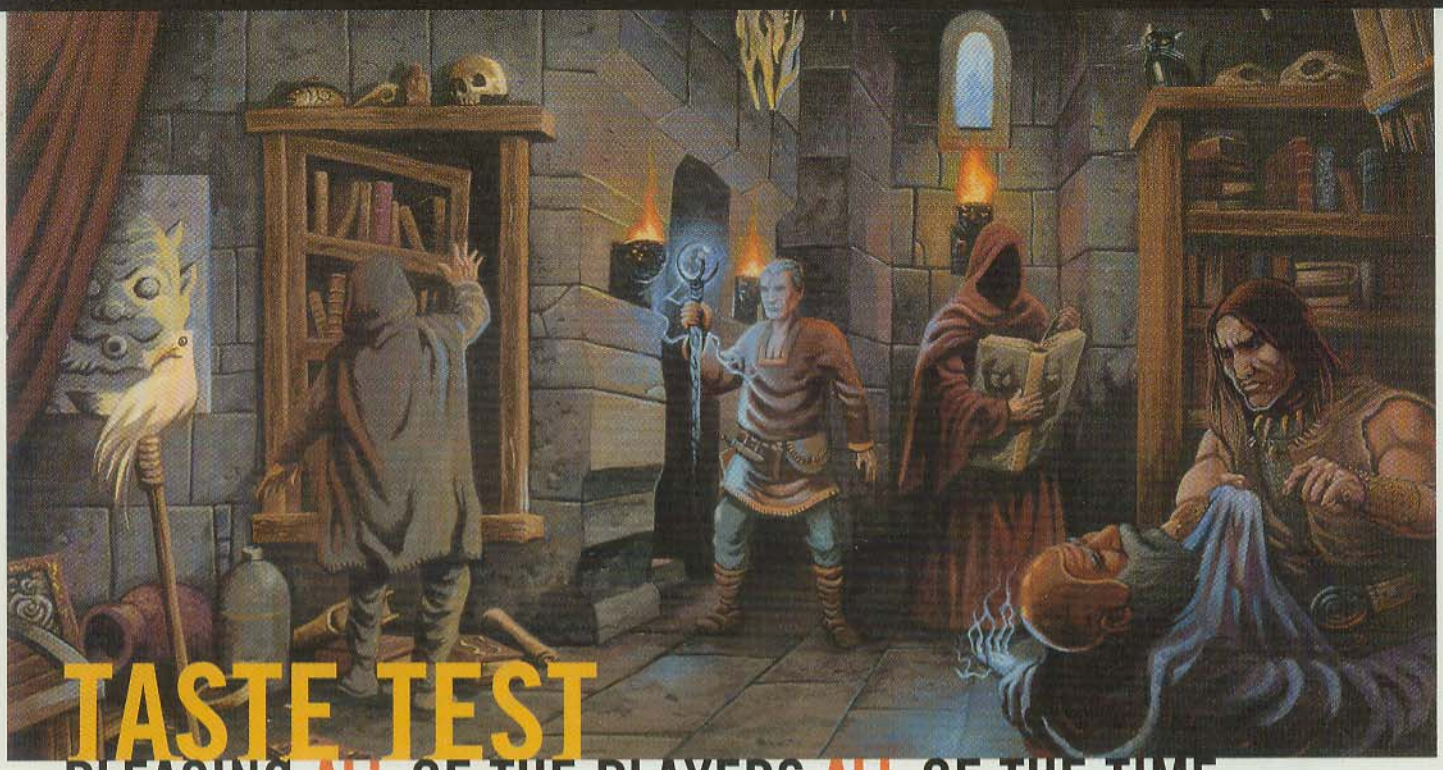
• **It's incredibly old:** An ancient dragon could be quite bored. It would have done everything already except die.

The death of a dragon is on par with nations going to war, and not to be taken lightly. The PCs that manage to kill one will doubtlessly become known for their deed (news spreads fast in the supernatural world). Friends will boast that they know the legendary warriors, and enemies will fear those who they scorned before.

Eternal glory is the prize won by a dragon slayer, which is why so many adventurers go to their graves chasing after this mythical and noble creature. D

OUR FAVORITE DRAGONS

DRAGON	SOURCE	RATING	NOTES
Smaug	*The Hobbit*	*****	King of the hill, top of the heap, nobody does it better.
Tiamat	Sumerian Legend	****1/2	The queen of dragons proves that five heads are better than one.
Puff	Some Hippie Song	*	Just thinking of him makes us sleepy.
Growf	"What's New!"	***	The little guy isn't much of a threat, but keep him out of water.
Oolong	*Tea with the Black Dragon*	****	Gentile but not gentled, R.A. MacAvoy's Chinese gentleman is more than he appears.
Draco	*Dragonheart*	*1/2	Even the voice of Sean Connery and cool CGI couldn't save this sad rip-off of Roger Zelazny's excellent story, "The George Business."
The Midgard Serpent	Norse myth	*****	The biggest dragon we know, and anything that can go toe-to-toe with Thor gets our vote.
Beowulf's Dragon	Old English Epic	****	Beowulf took down Grendel and Grendel's mother. This guy took down Beowulf. Need we say more?
St. George's Dragon	English Legend	**	This pitiful crocodile wouldn't scare a kid with a slingshot.
Elliot	*Pete's Dragon*	(0 stars)	We'd rather have charmander.



TASTE TEST

PLEASING ALL OF THE PLAYERS ALL OF THE TIME

by Robin D. Laws • illustrated by Peter Bergting

Fifty years from now, when the professors of the Department of Roleplaying Studies start their standard lectures to freshman students, one of the first points they'll make about the roleplaying game is that its devotees, in an age of increasingly mass-marketed, focus-grouped entertainment, bucked the trend and made their own stories. We were, they will say, both creator and audience at the same time.

Everything else they say will probably be blatant hoo-hah, but that basic point is one that we can take and use to improve our own games.

Where makers of megabuck motion pictures have to aim for the lowest common denominator (using the basic elements of smash-bang entertainment that will lure the maximum number of people into multiplexes), the only people you, as a DM, have to please are your players (and yourself, needless to say; a bored DM entertains no one). While the ulcer-ridden executives of Hollywood's loftiest towers have to run on test screenings and instinct, you have direct and regular contact with your audience. You know what your players want and can tailor your adventures to their tastes.

However, all too few DMs take advantage of the obvious resource that is the mood of the room. If you take the time to be attentive to player reactions when you run your games, you can determine which taste groups they belong to and tailor adventures for the maximum enjoyment of all.

LEARN TO IDENTIFY THE SEVEN TASTE GROUPS

- The Power Gamer
- The Steam Venter
- The War Gamer
- The Method Actor
- The Storyteller
- The Casual Gamer
- The Specialist

STEP ONE: Know Your Taste Groups

The concept of the taste group provides us with a useful set of wild generalizations. We've addressed it before (see "Logjam Busters," *DRAGON* #281) and will likely do so again.

Is one of your players mostly concerned with boosting his PC's abilities? If so, he is a **power gamer**. His decisions are geared toward soaking up the highest possible XP gains. When he racks up enough XP for a level gain, he chooses the ability increases, skills, spells, and feats that he thinks will grant him maximum benefit for the cost. The power gamer is a careful student of this magazine's "Power Play" tips.

The power gamer should not be confused with his close cousin, the **steam venter**. She likes combat, reveling in the vicarious joy of wading through columns of howling orcs or screaming kobolds. Whereas power gamers gravitate toward any race or class combinations they consider effective, the steam venter's character is probably a big, well-armored fighter bearing an enormous weapon. She wants to be the party's toughest combatant but might not want to put the same effort into achieving mastery over the rules as does the power gamer.

If a player prefers to win by cleverly confronting the tactical situation laid out in an adventure, he's a **war gamer**. War gamers want the strategies that pay off in your game to match up with both the lessons of military history and with their common-sense understanding of the real world. War gamers have trouble enjoying situations that defy their sense of realism, and they expect you to keep your portrayal of your world consistent from one encounter to

the next. Your consistency gives them a solid basis from which to launch their latest ingenious plan.

When there are enemies to attack, the power gamer reaches for his character sheet, the steam venter wants to charge right in, and the war gamer asks the DM to draw him a map.

A player more concerned with the emotional reality of her character than with victory or defeat is probably a **method actor**. She likes to interact with other PCs in character and to meet and greet your NPCs. She enjoys situations that allow her to illuminate her PC's personality. She runs into trouble when your adventure expects her PC to do things she considers out-of-character.

Her close relative is the **storyteller**, who is also interested in characterization but is always willing to adjust his character's behavior to further the story's overall momentum. (He's often a DM, too.) He's happy when the game feels like a thrilling movie or involving book. When the game becomes a random assemblage of unrelated scenes, he gets bored. When the pacing flags, look out: He might set out to cause trouble just to make things interesting.

When deciding whether to take part in a fight, the method actor asks herself if its outcome is important to her character, and the storyteller wonders if it matters to the plot.

The **casual gamer** often seems only half-interested in your game. She shows up to be with her friends but prefers to remain in the background. She might be shy or more interested in socializing with her buddies than learning the intricacies of the game. She prefers the simplest character types to run and might therefore tend to play fighters. Sometimes her buddies are able to convince her to fill out the group by taking a class needed to round out the party. The casual gamer is happy if she can participate minimally in your game. She becomes frustrated when you require her to think too hard about the rules, remember too many details of a situation, or take center stage.

For the purposes of this article, we'll also identify a new, seventh taste group: the **specialist**. A specialist is drawn toward one or two particular archetypes, classes or races that he tends to play over and over again. Many specialists, oddly enough, like to play ninjas. Others gravitate toward knights, bards, flying creatures, or cat people. The specialist is happy when a session allows him to show off his character's special schtick, and unhappy when he's a fish out of water.

When a fight breaks out, the casual gamer asks the power gamer what number she should roll against, and the specialist plans to deploy his distinctive combat maneuver.

STEP TWO: Identify Your Players

Having reviewed the taste groups, the next step is to make a list of your regular players. Then match them up to their taste groups.

A funny thing will happen as you do this. You'll find that these neat generalizations don't work for every player. Often, a player is a combination of a couple of types. Josie might be part steam venter, part storyteller. Sanjiv might be a casual gamer during the school year and a war gamer during the holidays.

A few players won't fit any categories at all, but the very act of trying to figure out what they're up to will probably suggest to you what it is that they want from your games.

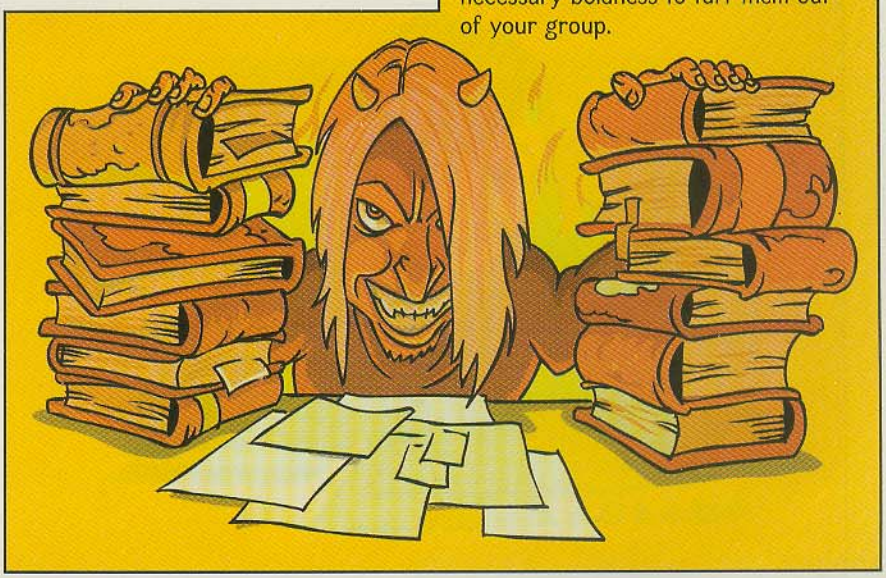
As an example, let's say that we have five players. Paul is a specialist; he rotates between a variety of favored PC types, but he's playing a bard at the moment. Mark is a method actor playing a haughty knight. Joel is a dedicated power gamer and steam venter. Dana is a storyteller playing a half-crazy woodland priestess. Chris is a casual gamer who's been roped into playing a rogue.

TASTE GROUPS FROM HELL

Alas, some players belong to taste groups whose pleasures come not from your game but from the disruption of it. Most of them get their charge from driving you, or occasionally their fellow players, around the bend. Chief among these are the **rules lawyers**, for whom the real game is trying to browbeat you into allowing ridiculous things. They do this by continually throwing tortured rules interpretations at you. Joining them in the legion of the darned are the **one-uppers**, who enjoy bringing their real-world beefs with another player into the game. These are the guys who usually start the intra-party fights that kill off PCs and bring your session to a hideous halt. Then there are the **loons**, who delight in making totally inappropriate choices for their characters, getting them—and usually the rest of the party—in gratuitous hot water. This makes them the center of attention, wreaking havoc on your ability to give the other players what they want.

Some of these people belong to regular taste groups but have been turned to the dark side. A rules lawyer is a power gamer gone bad. A one-upper is a steam venter who'd sooner bust up his friends than the bad guys. The loon might be a bored casual gamer or possibly a frustrated storyteller. You might be able to convert him back to the side of light by making sure your adventures accommodate his taste needs.

There are always a few incorrigible cases, though, who you're better off without. All you can do is marshal the necessary boldness to turf them out of your group.



STEP THREE:
Study Your Adventure

Whether your adventure is a published scenario or a series of notes you've jotted down on the back of a gum wrapper, you can always alter it to suit your group. Because it's often easier to mess with someone else's work than to modify the fruits of your own creative inspiration, let's start with the example of a published scenario.

Our example is an imaginary scenario called *The Horseman of Harst*. It breaks down into the following parts:

- A wealthy landowner hires the party to investigate a mysterious pyramid that rises ominously from the ground beneath his estate.
- The group's inspection of the pyramid trips a hidden door. Out comes a ghostly horseman who charges into a nearby town and beheads an apparently innocent merchant.
- Each night the horseman emerges from the pyramid to kill again. The landowner, who the townspeople hold responsible for the killings, is even more anxious than before for the party to solve his problem.
- Research in town reveals the legend of a vengeful horseman who promised to return to slay the family of a landlord who stole an heirloom from him. The victims are all descended from the accursed family, which has fallen on hard times. The family's ancient crypt lies outside a ruined city, now home to a band of ogre bandits.
- The party must explore the ruined city to find the crypt. Inside the crypt is the coffin of the horseman's killer. Wrapped around his skeletal hand is the necklace he stole.
- The party returns to the city just in time to find the horseman about to kill another victim. If they hand over the jewelry, the horseman vanishes.

STEP FOUR:
Make Checklists

Now make a list, with one entry for each player. Alongside their names, list their taste group identifications.

Player	Taste
Paul	Specialist (Bard)
Mark	Method Actor (Knight)
Joel	Power Gamer/Steam Venter
Dana	Storyteller
Chris	Casual

Note that, for the specialist and method actor, we've added reminders of their character types, because the nature of the elements you'll add to suit these players will vary by type.

Add a third column under the heading "Adventure Elements." Make a separate version of the chart for each session you expect the adventure to last. For example, we figure that *The Horseman of Harst* will take two sessions: the first encompasses the pyramid encounter, the horseman's attack, the investigation, and the trip to the ruins. The second session will cover the ruins exploration and the return of the jewel. That means two charts.

STEP FIVE:
See What You've Got

Now take a look at the adventure, broken down by session, and check to see which pre-existing elements will appeal to your various players.

In our example, Mark's method acting will be satisfied by the party's engagement by a wealthy landowner. His knight character is a snob and will enjoy dealing with a fellow member of the gentry. He'll also enjoy the opportunity to quell the social disorder caused by the ghostly horseman. He's taken care of for the first session, and we add these adventure elements to his line of the chart.

The adventure offers a storyline to justify its dungeon crawling and thus will appeal to Dana the storyteller. We can fill in her chart entries for both sessions without having to add anything to the adventure.

Next we check whether Paul, the specialist, gets to do something cool and bard-like. Indeed: He can talk to townsfolk and learn an old legend.

The second half, with its ruins exploration, gives steam-venter, power-gamer Joel plenty of butt to kick and lots of XP to gather up. It will be nice and simple, appealing to Chris the casual gamer. We've already taken care of Dana's storyteller needs.

CATEGORIZING NEW PLAYERS

Step Two assumes that you've gamed with each player long enough to get a fix on their tastes. It's inevitable that new players take a while to reveal themselves as you adjust to each other's ways. Even so, it's often possible to get an idea of a new player's tastes by asking her to describe her character. If she gleefully describes a big dumb guy with a sword, she's probably a steam venter. If she lists her PC's military experience and favored tactics, she's a wargamer. If she provides a lengthy discourse on the character's past history, you likely have a method actor on your hands.

Players who are new both to your group and to the D&D game should be treated as casual players, at least at first. One day they might be storytelling or specializing with the best of them, but for now you should keep their burden of rules knowledge and setting complexity as light as you can. Make their first gaming sessions simple ones so they can get the hang of things. It might even be worthwhile to postpone the more complicated pleasures of your war gamers or method actors while you break in the new recruit. If necessary, take the others aside and explain to them that you're making things simpler than usual for this reason.

STEP SIX:
Add What You Need

Now we've reached the point where you actually alter the adventure. In this step, you look for blanks on your charts and either add or change elements to fill them.

In Session 1, we need something for the power-gamer. It's possible that the group will fight the horseman, but the adventure is set up so that they can't defeat him in combat. They have to find the jewel to end his menace. That means that, even if there is a fight in session one, it will end in defeat, which is scarcely satisfying to Joel's steam venter side.

Likewise, Chris's casual attention might wander with the more complex investigative action of the first session.

We can kill two birds with one stone by adding a sub-plot. In our last game session, Chris ran afoul of a local gang, who tried to tax him for pick-pocketing on their turf. He ran away from them. If, during the investigation phase, the gang sends thugs to rough him up, Chris gets a simpler storyline to take part in, and Joel can have some enemies he has a good chance of beating and getting XP for. We add their entries to the relevant chart.

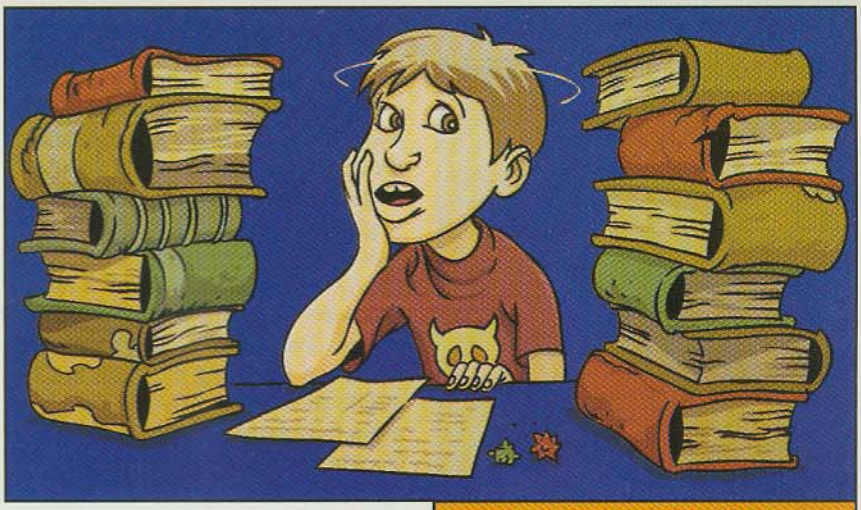
Session two includes the adventure's climax. When you have blanks to fill, it is always best to place them as close to the climactic sequence as possible. That makes the new elements important—and more likely to satisfy.

In our example, we have gaps for both Paul's bard and Mark's knight. Following the principle of relating the changes to the most important part of the session, we focus in on both the secret crypt (the target of the exploration sequence) and the return of the jewel to the ghost.

Looking for an opportunity for the bard character to shine, we focus on the challenge of opening the door to the crypt. The adventure allows the players to open the door when they solve a logic puzzle requiring them to move blocks into a particular order. Let's change this task into something more bard-friendly. Instead of a block puzzle, the door contains verses written in an ancient language. To open the door, the bard must translate the verses, and then sing them in an appropriate style. (In rules terms, he's using his bardic knowledge ability.) To increase the sense of reward Paul feels after overcoming this challenge, we can also consider giving him an experience bonus for success.

When tailoring adventures this way, it's important to guard against the classic error of hinging the entire scenario on the success or failure of a single roll. In this case, we also ensure that there is a back-up way to get into the crypt. If Paul can't attend this particular session, we have a backup already in place: We can resort back to the original puzzle.

The case of Mark's knight inspires us to go back to the first installment and change something to set up his focus moment in the second session. Mark's character is the kind of traditionalist who considers the rescue of innocent young maidens a prime knightly activity. We decide to increase the importance of an NPC he meets in the first part, so he discovers an especially sympathetic young woman belongs to the family targeted by the ghost. We make a note to play up the scene in hopes that the knight will pledge to



HEY, I THOUGHT THIS WAS MY GAME!

DMs fall into taste groups, too. They're willing to put in lots of work, or are fast thinkers on their feet. They tend to enjoy the sense of control and authority these qualities earn them. Their games tend to reflect their taste groups as players: If they're war gamers, military engagements take the spotlight. If they're method actors, open-ended interactions with NPCs during individual scenes take precedence over an overall storyline, and so on.

Some readers might be rebelling at the notion that they, as DMs, ought to cede creative control over their adventures just to accommodate the preferences of their players. If this describes you, you might want to ask yourself why your players should want to show up week after week. A DM's authority exists only so long as he keeps a group of players interested in coming back for more. Your players are not a captive audience. If they don't find what they want in your game, they'll find another DM or quit D&D altogether.

Don't worry; even when you adjust your adventure to fit your players' various preferences, there will still be plenty of opportunity to slip in the elements of D&D that keep you coming back for more.

SESSION #1

PLAYER	TASTE	ADVENTURE ELEMENTS
Paul	Specialist (Bard)	Investigate old legend
Mark	Method Actor (Knight)	Aristocratic patron/ quell disorder
Joel	Power Gamer/ Steam Venter	Thugs to beat up
Dana	Storyteller	Introduces storyline
Chris	Casual	Thugs: simple thing to do during investigation

SESSION #2

PLAYER	TASTE	ADVENTURE ELEMENTS
Paul	Specialist (Bard)	Decipher runes, sing door open
Mark	Method Actor	Save maiden; sword allows option of dramatic fight
Joel	Power Gamer/ Steam Venter	Ruins: ogres to fight
Dana	Storyteller	Concludes storyline
Chris	Casual	Simple

RECAP

Let's put those steps all in one place, for easy reference:

- [ ] Know Your Taste Groups
- [ ] Identify Your Players
- [ ] Study Your Adventure
- [ ] Make Checklists
- [ ] See What You're Missing
- [ ] Add What You Need

NOTE

You need to perform the first step only once. The second step is necessary only when a new player enters your game or an existing player's preferences change. (Players who mix the traits of various types might shift the balance each time they create a new character.) Most of the time, you'll need to perform only steps three through six.

save her. We make a change in the crypt scene, too. Along with the stolen jewelry, the PCs find a mighty sword. An inscription reveals that it was forged to slay vengeful ghosts. The original adventure assumes that the characters simply hand over the jewel, ending the adventure without a fight. The sword gives the knight (or, for that matter, Joel's steam-venter character) the option of slaying the ghost in a climactic street fight. After all, the ghost might have been swindled in his former life, but his murderous vengeance against his killer's distant descendants isn't exactly admirable.

Taste-Testing Your Own Adventures

In the case of an adventure of your own creation, it's unlikely that you'll write an entire adventure in full and then make changes to it. When you do, it's probably because you're dusting off an old adventure for a new group of players. In most cases, since you start out knowing your players and their taste groups, you can take them into account as you create the adventure. In fact, the taste charts serve as an excellent framework from which to build a tailor-made adventure. Take your basic idea and see how many of your players it serves. Then add new elements to fill in the blanks. Finally, weave the elements together into a logical sequence, and *voila*, you've got an adventure outline ready to go.

For example, we start with the idea of a follow-up adventure called *A Taste of Vengeance* (see sidebar), in which the thugs that Joel's character stomped attempt revenge against him. Maybe they see the fight against the ghost, and kidnap the rescued maiden to lure Joel into a trap. This gives Mark's knight good reason to sully his hands in a battle against mere street crooks. To create a diversion during the kidnapping, the thugs set fire to a tavern where the bard regularly performs; now he has reason to fight them, too. Dana, the storyteller, should be happy with the way this picks up on previous plot threads; maybe we'll also throw in a chance for her eccentric PC to impersonate her way into the enemy hideout. See the sidebar for a summary.

Now all we need is a map of the hideout and character statistics for the thugs, and a few extra surprises. As easy as that, we're ready to go.

A SIDE BENEFIT

Let's revisit the example of adding the fight with the thugs to the first session. In doing so, not only did we change a published adventure to fit the player's tastes but we also customized it to pick up on a story element from a previous installment. This makes your run-through of the adventure seem like a part of an integrated whole. In altering adventures to please, you'll often find yourself doing this. If something interested a player in the past, you already have a sure-fire way of maintaining his attention in your altered adventure. As in all matters of DM style, never be reluctant to do the obviously entertaining thing.

A TASTE OF VENGEANCE

PLAYER	TASTE	ADVENTURE ELEMENTS
Paul	Specialist (Bard)	Avenge tavern burning
Mark	Method Actor	Maiden needs a second rescue
Joel	Power Gamer/ Steam Venter	Thugs want a piece of him
Dana	Storyteller	Continues existing narrative; impersonation opportunity
Chris	Casual	Heat is now more on Joel's PC than Chris's; he can fade into background

WHAT'S YOUR PLEASURE?

Let us know what kind of gamer you are by sending a postcard marked **power gamer, war gamer, steam venter, method actor, casual gamer,** or **specialist** to:

"Taste Test" Survey
Dragon Magazine
1801 Lind Avenue, S.W.
Renton, WA 98055

ReaperMini.com **Combat Assault Vehicle** CavHq.com

Please Visit These Fine Retailers To Find Our New Releases!

AL - Wyvern Games LLC - 698 Commerce Ct, Ste A
Prattville, AL. 36066 - Fax (334) 358-2422 - **Vox (334) 358-2422**

AZ - Game Depot - 707 A South Forest Ave
Tempe, AZ 85281 -"Voted Arizona's Best Game Store" - **(480) 966-4727**

CA - D & J Hobby - 96 San Tomas Aquino
Campbell, CA 95008 - Djhobby.com - **(408) 379-1696**

CA - The War House - 630 West Willow Street
Long Beach, CA 90806 - Warhouse.hypermart.net - **(562) 424-3180**

CA - Adventurer's Guild of Riverside - 3320 Mary Street
Riverside, CA 92506 - (909) 682-0750 Fax - **(909) 682-1199 Vox**

CO - Attactix - 15107 E. Hampden
Aurora, CO 80014 - Attactix.com - **(303) 699-3349**

CO - Collector Mania - 17892 Cottonwood
Parker, CO 80134 - Collectormaniacs.com - **(303) 766-3530**

CT - Cave Comics - 57 Church Hill Road
Newtown, CT 06470 - Cavecomics.com - **(203) 426-4346**

FL - Book and Game Emporium - 311 NW Racetrack Rd.
Ft. Walton Beach, FL. 32547 - **(850) 863-7964**

FL - Borderlands Comics & Games - 10230-11 Atlantic Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32225 - Fax (904) 805-9522 - **Vox (904) 720-0774**

FL - War Dogs Game Center - 2580 Atlantic Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207 - **(904) 399-1975**

FL - Alternate Dimensions - 10049 SW. 72nd Street
Miami, FL 33173 - Altdim.com - **(305) 598-1771**

GA - The War Room - 2055 F Beaver Run Rd
Norcross, GA 30093 - Thewarroom.com - **(770) 729-9588**

GA - The Dragons Horde - 25563 Memorial Drive
Stone Mountain, GA 30083 - Thedragonshorde.com - **(404) 298-1188**

IA - Acme Comics and Collectibles, Inc. - 1622 Pierce Street
Sioux City, IA 51105 - Acmefirst.com - **(712) 258-6171**

ID - Dark Horse Games - 2226 Main Street
Boise, ID 83702 - **(800) 953-5620**

IL - Castle Perilous Games - Suite 203 - 715 S. University Ave
Carbondale, IL 62901 - members.aol.com/castlep - **(800) 297-2160**

IL - Dragon's Sanctum - 3213 23rd Avenue
Moline, IL 61265 - (309) 762-8692 Fax **(309) 762-5577 Vox**

IL - Be a Gamer - 741 South Route 31
West Dundee, IL 60118 - Beagamer.com - **(847) 844-7499**

KY - Rusty Scabbard - 820 Lane Allen Rd. # 12
Lexington, KY 40504 - Rustyscabbard.com - **(606) 278-6634**

KS - Table Top Game & Hobby - 7797 Quivera Road
Lenexa, KS 40504 - (913) 962-Gama Fax - **(913) 962-4263 Vox**

LA - Little Wars - 3036 College Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70808 - Littlewars.com - **(504) 926-4556**

MA - Grandmaster Games - 31 Faunce Corner Road
Dartmouth, MA 02747 - Grandmastergames.com - **(508) 994-5474**

MI - Discount Hobby - 35700 Beckley Road # E-20C
Battlecreek, MI 49015 - Discounthobby.com - **(616) 979-2262**

MI - Old Guard Hobbies - 35806 Van Dyke
Sterling Heights, MI 48312 **(810) 977-3969**

MN - Dreams - 3008 Texas Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426 - Nggnet.com/Dreams - **(810) 977-3969**

MO - Changing Hands Book Shop - 528 S. Virginia Ave
Joplin, MO. 64801 - Greyfox@ipa.net - **(417) 623-6699**

MO - Hobby Shop - 5840 Hampton
St. Louis, MO. 63109 - **(314) 351-4818**

MO - Gamer's Den - 550 East 5th Street
Washington, MO 63090 - Gramersdenonline.com - **(636) 239-4429**

NJ - Gamer's Realm - 202 Route 130 North -
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077 - Gamersrealm.com - **(856) 829-2900**

NJ - Jester's Playhouse - 2408 New Road
Northfield, NJ 08225 - Jestersplayhouse.com - **(609) 677-9088**

NJ - Gamers Realm - 2025 Old Trenton Rd -
West Windsor, NJ 08550 - Gamersrealm.com - **(609) 426-9339**

NM - Active Imagination - 11200 Montgomery # 10
Albuquerque, NM 87111 - **(505) 346-2232**

NY - Fantastic Planet - 24 Oak St
Plattsburgh, NY 12901 - **(518) 563-2946**

NY - The Dragons's Den - 52600 Sout Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 - edragonsden.com - **(845) 471-1404**

OH - Wolf's Lair Games - 33 E High St -
Springfield, OH 45502 - Wolfslairgames.com - **(888) 333-WOLF**

OK - Rip Tides - 2200 North Main
Altus, OK 73521 - **(580) 477-4173**

OK - The Original Game Shop - 6524 E 51st St - In the Farm
Tulsa, OK 74145 - **(888) 525-8647**

OK - Top Deck Games - 5970-K East 31st Street - Mall 31
Tulsa, OK 74145 - Topdeck.com - **(918) 665-7529**

PA - Gateway Sportscards Comics & Games - 833 W. 38th Street
Erie, PA 16508 - gatewaycardsandcomics.com - **(814) 864-3772**

PA - Excalibur Games & Collectibles - 227 East Street
Dunmore, PA 18512 - Excaliburgnc@aol.com - **(570) 341-8774**

PA - The Comic Store - 28 McGovern Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17602 - comicstorepa.com - **(717) 397-8737**

PA - Comic Store West - Maple-Village II, 984 Loucks Road
York, PA 17404 - **(717) 845-9198**

PA - Pastimes - 1 East Main - Pastimes1@aol.com
Palmyra, PA 17078 - (888) 260-9502 - **(717) 838-9502**

TX - Texas Game Company - 803 East Main Street
Allen, TX 75002 - **(972) 390-9467**

TX - Dragons Lair Comics - 4910 Burnett Road
Austin, TX 78756 - **(512) 454-2399**

TX - King's Hobby - 8810 N Lamar
Austin, TX 78753 - Kingshobby.com - **(512) 836-7388**

TX - Fantasy and Sci-Fi Games - 2220 Marsh Lane # 107
Carrollton, TX 75006 - **(972) 418-5409**

TX - Dibble's Hobbies - 1029 Donaldson Ave
San Antonio, TX 78228 - Dibbles@satx.net - **(210) 735-7721**

TX - Pegasus Loft - 2731 Southwest Pkwy, Suite 6
Wichita Falls, TX 76308 - wf.quik.com/pegloft - **(940) 692-7571**

UT - Dragons Keep - 131 North University
Provo, UT 84601 - Dragonskeep.com - **(801) 373-3482**

UT - B C Games - 958 West Colmar Ave, 1860 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84104 - Bcgames.com - **(801) 886-1888**

VA - Little Wars - 11213 C Lee Hwy
Fairfax, VA 22030 - Fabet@aol.com - **(703) 352-9222**

VA - Hobbies - 2342 Plank Road - Hobbiesontheweb.com
Fredericksburg, VA 22401 - **(540) 372-6578**

VA - Caught You Looking! - 817 South Mill, B-103
Your store here! VA. 24019 - **(972) 434-3088**

VA - Ground Zero - 55524-4 Williamson Road
Roanoke, VA. 24012 - **(540) 777-4856**

WA - The Game Store - 2012 S. 320th, # A
Federal Way, WA 98003 - Tgs@Nwlink.com - **(253) 946-2553**

WI - Chimera Hobby Shop - 425 West College Avenue
Appleton, WI 54911 - Chimerahobby.com **(920) 735-1201**

WI - Chimera Hobby Shop - 8347 West Division Street
Fond Du Lac, WI 54935 - Chimerahobby.com **(920) 922-8338**

WI - Fox Creations - 87517 32nd Avenue
Kenosha, WI 53142 - necropolisgames@wi.rr.com - **(920) 922-8338**

W V - The Realm - 1036 Walker Addition
Elkview, W V 25071 - The-Realm-Online.com - **(304) 965-7333**

Canada

QUE - Le Valet D'Coeur - 4408 St-Denis - Levalet.com
Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2L1 - Canada - **(888) 499-5389**

FOR A FREE CATALOG CALL (972) 434-3088 - WWW.REAPERMINI.COM

WISE AS AN OX, STRONG AS AN OWL

Play to Your Weakness

by Brian Rogers • illustrated by Jeff Laubenstein

So there you are, happily rolling up a new character, and suddenly you're looking at a 3. You glance up and down the table to see if anyone noticed, wondering how you can weasel out of this one. Sometimes it's best not even to try.

Instead, make the poor score your most noticeable trait. Experience will let you raise the score eventually, and keeping it makes the character challenging and memorable. Victory comes easily to characters with no weaknesses, so experienced gamers should relish the challenge of a low score while enjoying the roleplaying opportunities it presents. Characters with every ability at 15 or higher blur together into an above-average muddle, easily replaced and soon forgotten. Heroes struggling for victory with low scores stand out in comparison, inviting tales told at the gaming convention and respect from gamers who have seen multiple-18 characters come and go without improving the players or the game. If you're facing down a 3, these ideas might help you make a hero cut from less-than-perfect cloth.

When looking at a low ability score, remember that not every hero is remarkable for her crystalline intellect or iron muscles. Some are remembered for courage shown against the trials faced in youth, growth during adventures, or the curses they overcame. After all, triumphing over adversity is what heroes do.

STRENGTH

A character with a low Strength lacks muscle mass. He receives penalties to hit in melee combat and penalties to damage with most weapons. He can't climb well, lift much weight, or exert much force. While this might mean a character without athletic training, there are other options.

Weight factors into Strength—the larger you are, the greater your potential. For moderately low scores (6 to 9) you might be large without muscle tone: you can throw that weight around, but you are weak for your size. For lower scores, you might be emaciated: an apparition with sunken cheeks and fleshless limbs.

Age is another explanation. A low-Strength character could be old and frail, which works well for spellcasters, as age gives the appearance of experience and knowledge. Perhaps the character is particularly young. Playing a youngster has its advantages: adults ignore or underestimate children, and a child could be more flexible and easily hidden, but you should avoid life skills such as Knowledge, Profession, or Craft. Regardless, experience translates into maturity, and with maturity could come Strength.

You might have personality quirks centered around your meager muscles. Since you can't participate in physical labor, you might see yourself as above it, assuming every powerful frame holds a weak mind. You might take a "those who can't do, teach" attitude and direct the labor of others, or you might be envious of or deferential to those stronger than yourself. Even this most physical of abilities offers plenty of opportunities for roleplaying.

HOW TO COMPENSATE

• For fighting, low-Strength characters should buy crossbows—the only weapons that don't rely on Strength for either attacking or damaging opponents. You can do a hefty amount of damage with them, and with ranged weapon feats you become a serious threat.

• Getting a war horse is another idea, since the Trample feat lets you use your mount's Strength. This combines well with the crossbow—if you're a mounted crossbowman, no one will care what your Strength score is; they'll just get out of the way!

• If you can't afford a crossbow or a war horse, try carrying around the largest weapon available. You might look like Matthew Broderick holding Rutger Hauer's bastard sword in *Ladyhawke*, but when you roll 1d10 for damage you might at least do some harm if you hit.

If for some reason the character lacks any ability in combat, there are still ways to be useful:

• If you keep an eye on the party's back, you can prevent surprises and foil enemy sneak attacks.

• With a good AC and decent hit points you can defend archers and spellcasters, or you can play shield man to someone with a weapon with reach. You might not directly damage opponents, but giving the sorcerer time to finish a spell can be critical in a dangerous fight.

• Even yelling for the town guard or running for help could turn the tide of a battle without the need for an attack roll.

DEXTERITY

A low-Dexterity character suffers penalties to ranged attacks, Armor Class, Reflex saves, and any skills requiring coordination or agility. You're useless at moving quietly, can't maintain balance, neither throw nor catch well, and routinely dodge right into attacks. "She's clumsy" is the first response to a low Dexterity, but several other possibilities exist.

A handicap might be the cause of a low Dexterity, such as the classic peg-leg of a pirate. Perhaps you recently lost an eye: The loss of depth perception and peripheral vision could explain a low Dexterity. Equilibrium-altering wounds could be the reason. Perhaps your wizard was too near the origin of a *shout* spell, or maybe your priest heard her god's true voice.

Alternately, you could have tremors and poor motor control: You could be a wizard whose studies of the unknown left her with twitches she can neither stop nor explain, or a veteran whose constant drinking has dulled the memory of war but leaves her unsteady. Subterranean races often risk cave-ins, and many walk away with injured limbs and frayed nerves. Such people might be clumsy, but they are hardly inept, and their conditions can at least lend them a haunting history.

Roleplaying a low Dexterity depends on the score's rationale. Those hindered by a physical problem might use it to avoid hard or dangerous labor, or they might refuse assistance to prove that they're as good as anyone else. You might be perpetually apologetic or constantly upset over your blunders. Alternatively, you might make jokes about your apparent ineptitude or develop the excuses to cover for it ("Somebody keeps moving that plant!"). The key to roleplaying a low dexterity lies in how the character feels about her fumbling and how she expresses it.

HOW TO COMPENSATE

• You'll have to accept that you won't hit at range, forcing you into close combat. Once in melee, you're going to be easy to hit. Low-Dexterity characters should buy the best armor available, regardless of armor penalties. If you already have a Dexterity modifier of -4, armor penalties are just reinforcing what we already know: You're no good at Dexterity-based skills. Even wizards and sorcerers should consider leather armor, since a 10% spell failure is a reasonable trade for getting their AC closer to double digits.

• Low Dexterity characters should make use of cover or concealment. Cover gives bonuses to Armor Class, and concealment gives opponents a chance to miss, both of which help a poor AC. If there isn't any cover available, make some! Overturned tables, altars, or benches give you something to hide behind and prevent mobile opponents from charging through your party's ranks.

• If you have a reach weapon, you can use other party members as cover, standing in the second rank and attacking over their shoulders. The opponent faces two foes, and your poor Armor Class doesn't become an issue. Just remember that your enemy gets cover from your attacks as well, and—if you miss—you risk hitting your ally.

• You can reduce some of the penalties of a low Dexterity score with feats (Improved Initiative and Lightning Reflexes), but this means sacrificing an advantage to offset a weakness. This is usually a poor investment. Feats are better spent making you heroic, not raising you to average.

• One feat you should consider taking with a low Dexterity is Expertise. If your Intelligence is high enough, pick this up—it lets you improve your Armor Class when needed and allows you to take other feats that offset a poor AC. Few people attack well when disarmed or prone.

CONSTITUTION

Low-Constitution characters have penalties on hit points and Fortitude saves, as well as Concentration checks when casting spells. They are easily knocked out and easily killed, since having poor hit points is a fatal flaw for an adventurer.

Many of the physical descriptions of a low Strength or Dexterity can translate well for low Constitution. Characters who are extremely underweight or overweight might be easily winded or unable to resist injury. An elderly character's health could be ravaged by age. You could have old wounds (such as an arrow through the lung) or be a plague survivor. Old wounds explain a lack of stamina while emphasizing your will to survive.

More dramatically, you might be the victim of a long-term disease. For example, tuberculosis can take years to kill, leaving victims weak and coughing up blood, but Doc Holliday was the most feared gunman in the West even as tuberculosis was killing him. In fantasy settings, even more insidious illnesses exist, sapping your life while allowing limited activity. A character facing his own death head on and refusing to wait for it engenders respect.

A low Constitution often shows itself in personal behaviors. You might constantly push yourself too far and then collapse until forced to move again, or lean against the wall and rest at every opportunity. You might have remedies or medicines you constantly prepare to bolster your Strength, or obstinately ignore your problems. Roleplaying a low Constitution relies more on what you're doing and how you're doing it than what you say.

HOW TO COMPENSATE

- More than other characters, low-Constitution adventurers should avoid combat. Unless you're playing a class with large Hit Die, a 3 Constitution leaves so few hit points that any attack equals death. But classes with a large Hit Die are expected to handle more combat, however, putting you back at risk.
- You must avoid taking damage, and that means wearing whatever gives you the best Armor Class, following all the advice for finding cover discussed above, and relying on guile whenever possible.
- Fortunately, low Constitution penalizes neither ranged nor melee combat, so you can attack from range or defend up close as long as you avoid attacks. This is where skills and feats come in. Taking ranks in the Tumble skill and gaining feats like Spring Attack can negate your enemies' ability to attack you.
- Watch out for poisons and creatures that cause Constitution damage. If you drop to 0 Constitution, you die, and with a low Constitution score there's a good chance that the initial Constitution damage will kill you. Try to get your hands on *neutralize poison* and *lesser restoration* potions. If you can, cast *neutralize poison* on traps and creatures before you come in contact with them.
- Cunning could make combat unnecessary: Scatter coins among opponents to distract them; heave a spare lantern into the enemy; cut the rope holding a chandelier overhead. These certainly change the field of battle without calling down attacks.
- Some feats help a low Constitution (Great Fortitude, Endurance, Combat Casting), but the only required feat is Toughness: A +3 hit point bonus is a godsend for a low-Constitution character. You'll still have to worry about low hit points at higher levels, but at least you'll live to see them.
- Finally, if you have levels as a wizard or sorcerer, grab a toad as your familiar. It isn't glamorous, but the +2 Constitution means another hit point per level—living longer is more important than looking cool.

INTELLIGENCE

A character with a low Intelligence learns slowly and reasons poorly. She has penalties on the number of skill points per level and on any skills based on learning.

Some thought should be applied to why you have such a low Intelligence. You might have never had an opportunity to study, or perhaps you were forcibly banned from doing so. You could've grown up on the streets, among war refugees, or as a slave, where any attempt at learning was severely punished. You might have been raised by animals, a fantasy classic for characters with a nature bent. While brilliant people might come from such backgrounds, most survive by intuition, guile, perception, and will—in other words, traits associated with Wisdom and Charisma, not Intelligence.

For a great challenge, you might be an amnesiac, forgetting anything more than 24 hours old. Head trauma occasionally causes such problems. You are reborn every morning, with no guide save those around you and whatever notes you left for yourself. You need solid roleplaying skills and DM permission before trying something this extreme.

When playing a low-Intelligence character, you could play it for laughs, as with the barbarian who claims "newly discovered" towns and names them after her father. Or you could play it for terror by taking offense at people talking down to you and snapping into vindictive rages. You might insist on having a say in any discussions and want your not-so-helpful ideas respected, or you might keep your mouth shut to avoid looking the fool. You could repeat others' suggestions as your own or constantly request more time to work through problems. Remember that a character with a low Intelligence can learn and reason through everyday things, they simply can't do it quickly or reliably. You needn't stifle your every creative thought, as long as you aren't constantly brilliant or quick.

HOW TO COMPENSATE

- The mechanical challenge for a low Intelligence is your diminished skill points. This penalty usually wipes out all but the minimum 1 point per level. Playing a human restores one of those points, but you should rely on the special abilities of your class and one or two non-Intelligence-based class skills. Denied a breadth of skills, you should focus on a few strong points.

WISDOM

Someone with a low Wisdom lacks common sense, perception, intuition, and willpower. He is penalized on both his Will saves and skills involving untrained experience or awareness.

A poor Wisdom score is the hardest to explain, since it covers such a broad area. Wisdom is something one gains with age, so you might consider a young character to explain a low Wisdom. Take care with this, since a well-played low-Wisdom child will quickly get himself into trouble and might drag the party down with him. Perhaps you come from a culture vastly different than the local norm: Detail this culture with your DM, with both good and bad points, and stick with it. You'll miss local cultural cues, make assumptions based on false premises, and argue against things the rest of the party takes for granted. ("Letting women drink ale instead of wine? It will corrupt their souls!") You wouldn't be stupid, merely ignorant of local custom.

When playing a low-Wisdom character, make it clear that the party can't rely on you in the long term. In the short term, during the course of a fight or while exploring a dungeon, they can keep an eye on you and trust that you will do your part. But if left on watch alone you might fall asleep, get engrossed in spell research, or otherwise lose focus. In delicate negotiations you'll let secrets slip or take offense where wiser diplomats would not. You might forget to mention things you've learned until a critical moment, or assume that your companions must know things, and thus never mention them. The party should probably put another PC to watch over you, just to make sure your impulsiveness doesn't endanger them.

HOW TO COMPENSATE

• A low Wisdom offers comparatively few mechanical problems. Some important skills are reduced, and the penalty on Will saves can be troublesome, but all told the low-Wisdom character suffers few survival challenges. The feats of Alertness and Iron Will compensate for most hindrances, but at the usual cost of not honing your other strengths.

CHARISMA

A low Charisma comes from a lack of faith in yourself, translating directly into an inability to interact with people. The character is penalized on all skills that involve social interaction, as well as any non-skill interaction checks.

When dealing with a low Charisma you should remember that these personality traits don't appear without cause—no one is born with a 3 Charisma. What caused you to lose faith in yourself? Possibly your family or culture valued everything you were poor at and never praised your skills: Shy to an extreme, you avoid conversation for fear of being insulted, belittle your abilities, and view any comment as criticism. You might be an escaped slave: Deeply ashamed of your past, you either lash out verbally or meekly follows suggestions as orders. You might have once had personal faith, now shattered by some terrible event. This trauma need not have been your fault—you believe it to be so even if the world holds you blameless. An accidental killing, a failure of nerve on the battlefield, the inability to save a loved one, or failing a test of character can shake your self respect. Once that is lost, it is hard to gain the respect of others.

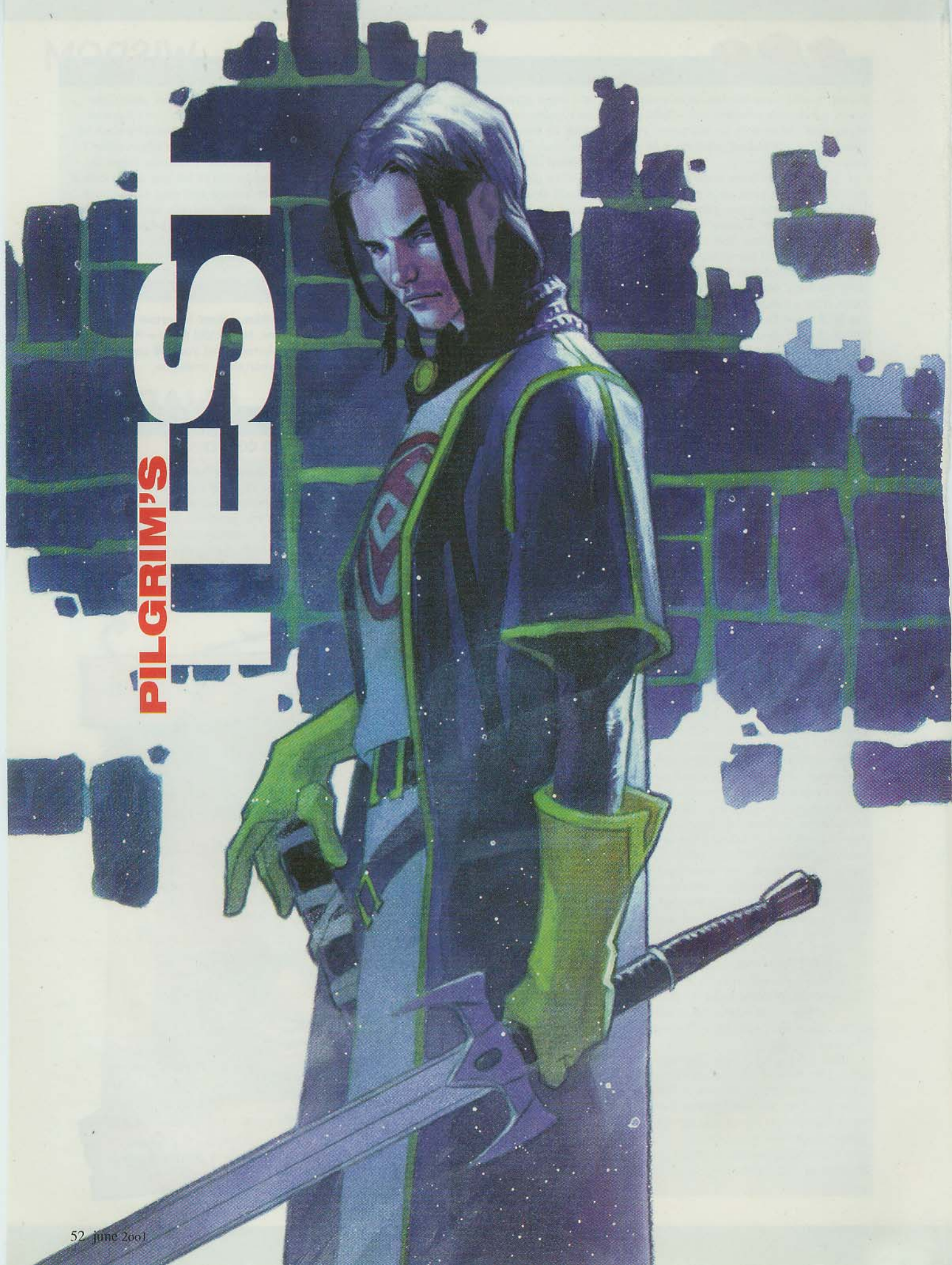
Alternatively, you might be extremely ugly. Not just homely, but malformed to the point where children scream and women faint. Faced with such reactions you see yourself as an outcast while still desperately wanting to be accepted by society. Note that this is very different from the high-Charisma half-orc who looks like ten miles of bad road but whose magnetism unites an army—appearance matters to Charisma only if you let it matter.

When roleplaying a poor-Charisma character, keep in mind why the character has such a low score and run with it. This might mean never voicing a suggestion (even if you know what to do), or voicing every suggestion loudly and authoritatively—since if it isn't accepted it damages your already fragile sense of self. Belittle NPCs to prove you're better than them, and even make jibes at the other PCs' expense (though not too often, or you'll reduce other people's enjoyment of the game). Here's another idea: Start whispering ideas in character to another PC, letting him voice them to the group—since your character thinks no one listens to her ideas, she can contribute without putting her ego at risk.

HOW TO COMPENSATE

• If your character has a low Charisma, accept the fact that you aren't the party's spokesperson. Any interaction is going to suffer serious penalties, but you might pick one of the Charisma-based skills as a focus for skill points, giving you a way to interact with a skill bonus.

PILGRIM'S JESU



WRITTEN BY
thomas
HARLAN

ILLUSTRATED BY
d. alexander
GREGORY

JERUSALEM, LATE WINTER, 1113 A.D.

HEARTSICK, HAROLD GODWINSON stormed up a flight of narrow steps. He was desperate for fresh air. Soot-stained walls loomed over his head and hemmed in his broad shoulders. He stepped out onto a rooftop where pure white snowflakes began to settle in his long hair. He breathed deeply, filled with inexpressible relief to be out of the twisting warren of the city streets. A flat roof stretched out to his right, ending in a crumbling dome and then the side of another building.

A chill wind bit at his face. He turned east, squinting into blowing snow. The storm—all ice and chill wind—was completely unexpected. Judea was usually a bitterly hot, dry province, carefully designed to torment fair-skinned young men raised in the green hills of England. *There will be snow on the ground in the morning,* he thought, his foul mood lifting a little. *And all the barren hills and mean little villages and this stinking, empty, ghost-ridden town will be hidden under a mantle of pure white.*

He snorted, stepping to the low wall surrounding the roof. He had never expected to see a real winter here, not under the endless brassy sky and white-hot anvil of the Judean sun. More snow gusted across the rooftop, obscuring the view. In the distance, over a rumpled quilt of whitewashed domes, flat roofs, church spires, and limestone battlements, the golden shape of the Templum Domini, the house of God, was intermittently visible through the storm.

The sight of the Temple Mount revived his bleak anger, and the coldly superior voice of Hughes de Payen cut at his memory. *Our order,* whined the Frenchman in his Champagnois accent, *is one of pious, dutiful knights dedicated to the protection of those holy pilgrims who come to the city of God. They are not braggarts or swaggering rogues or Saxon fools who rush in like bellowing oxen.* Harold's fists clenched, his gut roiling with furious anger. De Payen's rejection had destroyed a carefully hoarded dream.

"You! Boy!" a voice called across the roof. The Saxon turned, hand curling reflexively around the hilt of his longsword. His expression gave the four strangers pause, their boots sliding in the slush on the roof. "You should not be here," finished their leader.

"I go where I wish," Harold replied in his poor French. "I am a knight of the Kingdom of God and Jerusalem, given these spurs by *le bon roi* Baldwin himself!"

The largest of the four men laughed through a thick black beard as he slapped his ham-sized fists together. He was wearing well-made gloves, like a knight's, but he lacked the silver spurs on his boots or the signet of a landed man. Harold didn't recognize the intruders, though there were only a few hundred Christian knights in the city, supplemented by two or three thousand mercenaries, merchants, "ladies," slaves, Greeks, and churchmen.

"And," Harold said, stepping forward, "I am not a boy."

"Oh," sneered the man, looking Harold up and down—but mostly up, as the Saxon had an easy five inches on him, "I thought you were lost. These streets are as twisty as a Greek tongue. It would be easy to get lost from your father's entourage . . ."

"My father is at home in Mercia, tending to his own business." Harold put his shoulder between the black-bearded man and his nearest companion. "You should do the same."

Blackie's eyes narrowed, and Harold caught the flicker of a glance over his shoulder. The Saxon heard two pairs of hobnailed boots scraping on the roof behind him.

"Come with us, boy, and we'll look for him together. He'll want his spurs back."

Harold's fist blurred. The implication that his knightly spurs had been stolen or borrowed from another lit his anger like a spark in wheat dust. There was a sharp crack and a flicker of pain in his knuckles, and Blackie was flying backward, eyes wide, blood spurting from a broken tooth. Harold spun to face the men behind him. There was no time to draw his blade. The two sergeants leapt at him, one—a pox-faced man—punching at his throat, the other—red-haired—kicking at his legs. The Saxon twisted aside, taking a punch on his shoulder with a grunt, then swinging his own heavy fist, scarred and toughened by years of labor in his father's wood-lots, into the nose of the red-head. The blow sounded like an axe striking a pine log, and the rascal's head snapped to the side.

Poxy threw a punch into Harold's side, and the Saxon felt his ribs creak. Poxy shouted in pain and surprise, for Harold did not go abroad in this lawless city unarmored. A thick shirt of iron links, each the size of Harold's thumb, lay under his brown mantle and cloak. The Saxon bellowed, throwing his shoulder into his attacker, rocking the fellow back before smashing his face with an elbow. Armored sleeves ran to his wrists. Iron rings raked across the man's face.

Boots squeaked on the wet stone, and steel rasped on iron.

Harold ducked back just as Blackie's sword hissed past his nose. The Frenchman shouted, a sharp bark like a mastiff, and waded in, his blade flickering silver in the air. Harold slipped backward in the slush. The tip of Blackie's blade scored his arm, cutting through the linen shirt sleeve and sparking on the iron beneath.

"At him!" Blackie shouted, the tip of his sword dancing a foot from Harold's eyes. The sergeant circled, and Harold matched the movement. The other men were moving forward. The fourth man, who had held back, now drew his blade. Out of the corner of his eye, Harold saw the gleam of fine, watery steel. The Saxon swallowed. That was a knight's blade, or better. These were not the usual scum who haunted the empty city.

The Frenchmen edged forward. Harold skipped back, giving ground. Blackie laughed, a hoarse *chuh-chuh-chuh* sound. Harold's face settled into a tight mask, his anger washed away by adrenaline. His blade, old iron dark in the gray light, sang out of its sheath. Blackie jumped at him, swinging overhand, and their blades met with a sharp *ting!* Harold pushed, throwing the other man back. Blackie cursed, but his fellows nipped in from the side like lithe hunting dogs against a bear. Harold fell back again, sword high, his left heel running into brick. A wall? The wall at the edge of the roof!

Poxy and Red rushed at him. Harold shouted, leaping forward, catching one blow high on his sword, then wrenching it to the side. The soldier cried out, his blade flying away. Poxy dodged aside, flinching back from the sword spinning past. Harold slashed at him, making Poxy leap backward, then he turned, sheathed his sword in a fluid motion, and leapt up onto the side of the plastered dome.

Harold's boots skidded on the wet, curving surface, then he got a hand on the top of the white dome and swung around to the far side. He heard a sharp bang as plaster, brick, and rotten wood crumbled under his weight. Harold shouted in alarm, flailing, his hand scraping across the bricks. The domed roof collapsed with a hollow boom and Harold was suddenly falling in a cloud of ancient brick, splinters, and plaster dust.

"I should have gone with him," muttered Manwys. "Now he's gotten lost." The Welshman turned off what passed for a wide street in the warren of the city into a cavernous room. Slick dark pools of rainwater reflected sooty walls and an oval doorway giving onto a stairwell. "Master Harold?"

Manwys paused at the bottom of the stair, his weathered old face puzzled. There was a muddle of footprints on the steps. Manwys's nostrils flared; on the chill air he smelled sweat, oil, and heavy lemon pomade. His lips tightened into a thin line, then a nine-inch hunting knife appeared in his grip. He slipped up the stairs quietly.

On the roof were two men in heavy dark cloaks standing over the cracked ruin of a dome. The snow was falling heavily, though it was nothing any Welshman would call a storm. Manwys slipped out onto the roof, padding quietly along the wall. Both of the cloaked men were respectably dressed, in good boots and fine leather gear. They leaned on the edge of the broken dome, staring down into darkness.

"Do you see anything?" The taller man spoke, his voice rich and deep with a Champagnois accent. "Is the boy alive?"

There was muffled shouting from below, and the man—no, thought Manwys, the knight—guffawed. His companion, a black-bearded fellow with a purpling bruise on one cheek and a split lip, did not laugh. "He'll be dead then, if there's a cistern below, drowned if not broken."

Manwys felt an inner chill. His lord and master, the youthful Harold, was an eager sort, always ready for a test of strength or will. He glanced across the rooftop, saw scattered droplets of blood, a fallen blade, the thin layer of snow disturbed. *A fight, an ambush . . . and he fell through the roof.* Manwys slipped away, a ghost in dark gray and brown, then vanished into the stairwell.

Below, the narrow streets seemed gloomier than before. Manwys hurried down an echoing arcade. He bowed to an old priest hurrying the other way, then began to jog, lean old legs carrying him swiftly through a broken arch and up ranks of broad flat steps. He silently berated himself for leaving his arms and gear at their lodgings. The city was not safe, even for a strong, young knight and his canny esquire.

Manwys turned a sharp corner, taking the steps three at a

time, and skidded to a halt. His hand brushed the garment of a small man who had been walking swiftly the other way. Manwys turned aside and made a reflexive bow—not to the little thin-faced Italian but to his master, a florid, heavy-set man wearing an indescribable hat. "Pardon!"

The little servant straightened his doublet, flashing a grin. "Pardon, sir. Are you familiar with these streets?"

"Yes," Manwys said, pausing. These two didn't seem to be the usual sort of poor pilgrims, churchmen, or avaricious knights. "What are you seeking?"

"Good man," rumbled the heavy man in the violently orange and puce hat, "We have been directed to lodgings at the hospice of Saint Sebastian." Manwys raised an eyebrow, taking in the heavy brocaded robe and vestments, the rings on pudgy fingers, the gleam of intelligence in the deep-set, blue eyes. There was an air about this man, something like one of the high churchmen . . . but no priest had half-hidden tattoos of spiky, glyph-like signs on his wrists.

"I . . . would not recommend such a place," Manwys said, looking the two strangers over. The little Italian was watching the Welshman carefully, hands hidden in his cloak. Manwys almost smiled, seeing the soft outline of a blade. This one is no fool. "It is thick with fleas, mountebanks, charlatans, and rogues of all kinds. The meal is watery soup and only twice a day."

"Ah," said the heavy-set man, disappointed. "Can you recommend better?"

"I can," Manwys said, conscious of time slipping away, "but I've no time to show you. My master . . ." He stopped, suddenly smiling. Despite their disreputable appearance, he was suddenly sure that these were—in their own way—honorable men. A useful tool, honor. "My master would welcome you at his table, where we sup three times a day, though not as well as the King!"

The heavy-set man pushed back one of the translucent bladders that drooped over his eyebrows and shared a quick glance with the little Italian. "Well spoken, sir. What is your name?"

"I am Manwys," the Welshman said, "esquire of the noble knight Sir Harold Godwinson."

"I am Golonza di Barati," intoned the heavy-set man, bowing. The little Italian leaned aside from Golonza's sweeping arm with fluid ease and made his own slight obeisance. "This is my servant, Ruggero."

"Well met," the Welshman nodded politely to the little man. "Follow me and quickly, for my master is in something of a pickle."

Trotting through narrow streets, Manwys led them up a steep curving alley. The sky above was only a narrow strip crowded by buildings and church towers. After a moment—with Golonza breathing heavily—they came to a solid-looking door set into a bare and unremarkable wall. Manwys produced an iron key. He was conscious of Ruggero watching him intently, so he contrived to turn, putting his body between the Italian and the lock. There was a half-heard laugh.

Inside, the Welshman strode across a long empty hallway and into a side chamber.

"Pick a room that pleases you," he called out, rooting about in the packs and baggage. "My master and I have taken this side for our goods, and for sleeping." He found a leather satchel and hefted it, hearing the clink of iron and wood. A coil of rope and a box of tallow candles was tossed in. Manwys sighed, looking around at the baggage. He was sure that he'd want something once he'd left the building.

"Any room?" Ruggero was at the doorway. "Where are your servants?"

Manwys slung the satchel over his shoulder. He felt better already, with his waxed leather bowcase and quiver in hand. The yew-backed bow was bulky, but the weight on his shoulder felt right. "Servants are in short supply in Jerusalem, my friend. The common people are all, well, dead. Please, make yourselves comfortable. You are our guests here. Once I've recovered my daring young master, we'll sit and greet you properly, with mead, salt, bread, and a fine mutton roast."

Ruggero made a face, despairing. "Is there nothing to eat in this province but mutton?"

Manwys laughed. "Pray, you're not tired of the taste already?"

"I am!" Ruggero's mobile features pantomimed horror, but he met Manwys' grin with one of his own. The Welshman was sure the lithe little man had eaten worse.

"You'll suffer then," Manwys said, wagging his finger. "There's neither beef nor venison to be had in all this land. Only bread, mutton, olives, and perhaps a pomegranate if you're lucky."

Golonza was still in the hallway, shapeless hat squeezed under one arm like a dying octopus. The man was older than Manwys had first thought, in his late forties, with a worn, lined face and thinning, brown hair. He leaned heavily on an old staff, standing among his bags.

"This was once a great house," Golonza said, looking up. Manwys nodded. The ancient paintings—dolphins and sharks sporting among fish-tailed men and women in a bright blue sea—were peeling, cracked, and stained by smoke. "But I think that your master did not pay much for it, not now."

"No," Manwys smiled grimly. "In the city of God, common folk sleep where royalty once lay."

"And the owners?" Golonza turned, eyes in shadow, hands clasped on the staff. "What of them?"

Manwys shrugged. "Dead, with all those who lived in this place before we Christians came."

"There must be many ghosts." Golonza's voice was somber.

"No, none that I have seen. Pray rest, and I will return as soon as I can."

"Your master is in trouble?" Ruggero did not seem tired at all, shifting constantly from one foot to another. "But not a fight. You're bringing rope and climbing pins?"

"Yes," Manwys spared a glance for the little man, seeing that the Italian was eager for something interesting to do. "He has fallen into an old cistern. Well, perhaps he was pushed."

"We will help," Golonza said, leaning wearily on his staff. "We would be poor guests otherwise."

Manwys swallowed his grin. "Thank you, sir, that is very Christian."

Di Barati's eyes narrowed, and a shadow seemed to pass over his face.

Harold blinked in darkness, back throbbing with pain. Cautiously, unable to see, he rolled over, dirt and broken pottery sliding off his shoulders and chest.

"Hello?" Harold groped around in the darkness for a wall, a roof, anything. He seemed to exist in a dark void. Looking up, he let his eyes adjust to the darkness. Ghostly lights flickered before him, but after a moment he could see a patch of gray sky high above. He remembered striking something at an angle, then rolling. He supposed, from the carpet of pottery shards and rotted cloth under his feet, that the pit was being used as a rubbish tip.

He froze, hearing voices. The opening was occluded. The men-at-arms.

Harold slid forward. After a moment, while the noise above got louder, he found a wall with his outstretched hand and then, scuttling along it, an opening. Measuring the ancient door with his blind hands, Harold ducked down and then crawled along a passage. Now it was truly dark. Strangely, the fetid closeness of the city was gone, leaving only a clean, cool darkness.

Harold smiled, feeling a breeze on his face. Somewhere far ahead, he smelled water.

"You're a fool to pick a fight with four armed men," Harold grumbled to himself. In his hands, flint and iron scraped. Momentary sparks flashed in the darkness. "They'd have killed you in another moment. Even Frenchmen could stave your head in."

The tinder caught, lighting his face with a warm glow. The Saxon waited, letting the fire settle, and then looked around, running his hands over old square-cut paving stones under a layer of dust. The tinder would die quickly. A vague white shape drew his eye. Picking through the dirt, Harold grinned, his poor humor wiped away by the feel of beeswax.

Harold lit the candle stub, then stood, bending a little to avoid striking his head on the arched roof, letting the warm yellow flame steady. The light showed a broad tunnel receding into darkness. It was wider than any street above, paved with close-fitted stones and fine regular arches on either side. "Only one way to go!"

Harold made good time along the buried road. The tunnel tended downward and the air grew damper. After a bit, he slowed his pace, holding up the candle. The tunnel ended abruptly in some larger darkness, opening out beyond the reach of the light. The sound of rushing water rose up from below. Harold moved forward cautiously, feeling his way with a booted foot. The paving stones were loose and crumbling.

There was a pit, a jagged slash that ran across the tunnel. In the feeble light, Harold could not see the other side. He bit his lip, wondering how strong the footing was.

"There he is!" A shout rang out in the tunnel.

Harold turned carefully, his thumb and forefinger snuffing out the candle. Bobbing lights were approaching. He shifted the cloak, freeing his right arm. Fingers wrapped around the old worn leather of his sword hilt and he pressed against the wall of the tunnel. *Who are these men?* he wondered. *They seem eager for my acquaintance.*

Five men ran up, Poxy and Blackbeard in the lead, the others just behind. The Saxon gathered himself, then paused, startled, as he saw a blazon now revealed on the knight's tunic. A Champagnois? His jaw jumped, and anger welled up in him again. So! Insults were not enough for him?

Harold stepped out of the darkness, sword—still sheathed—cracking sharply across Red's face. The man grunted like a pig on the butcher's block, then toppled backward.

The Franks shouted in alarm, and Harold added his own sharp bellow. Poxy flinched, crashing into the man behind him. Harold twisted, catching Blackie's sword-blow on the flat of his scabbard. Bright sparks jumped from grating metal, then the man's blade jammed against the crossbar. Holding him at bay with one hand, the Saxon punched Blackie sharply in the face. Bone cracked, and there was a howl. Harold kicked him in the gut, sending the Frenchman sprawling on the stones.

Another man jumped in, swinging overhand at the Saxon's head. Harold grinned, dancing back. The man's sword struck the low ceiling, jammed for an instant, and the Saxon lunged, the blunt tip of the scabbard slamming into his stomach. Breath oofed out and the man staggered back. "Saxon dog!"

Harold skipped back, his sword clanking once, then twice as the knight with the water-steel blade attacked. This one was quick, his arm strong, the gleaming sword blurring in the air. Harold was hard pressed, blocking one blow by a fraction, then grunting as the blade whipped at his thigh. The Saxon blocked downward, the scabbard cut nearly in half as it caught the blow. Harold shifted his feet, feeling his footing go awry. The stones were loose.

There was a grinding sound. Harold lost his balance, swinging his arms. The sheath slithered off his sword, flying into darkness. The French knight leapt back, and the whole section of floor suddenly gave way with a crack! Harold lunged, kicking forward, but the stones peeled away and he barely managed to catch the edge of the chasm with his hand. He fought for breath, brick dust squeaking under his fingertips.

Above him, Harold caught a wild glimpse of the French knight leaning down, hand outstretched. Cursing in dismay, boots scrabbling for purchase, Harold felt his fingers slide out of the grainy stone. He fell, wind whistling around his ears.

With a sharp boom the Saxon struck a walkway of planks spanning the chasm. Wood splintered, broke with a snap, and then—stunned—he was falling again. Desperate, he tried to twist around and get his feet under him. Harold hit dark water with a slap, and a jet of spray cascaded against hidden walls. Icy water flooded his nose and mouth.

"Do you smell it?" Manwys leaned out, over the shattered dome. His nostrils flared, then he sprang back. "Smoke . . . lanterns."

"There are rope marks," Ruggero was crouched on the rooftop. "Some men must have climbed down." The corner of his mouth twitched, "and some went away, back down the stairs."

The Welshman looked down into the pit again, rubbing a hand against the back of his neck, then at Golonza. The older man was standing to one side, staring out over the rooftops of the city. The snow was falling harder. Manwys supposed that such a day might come once a year in Judea. "Master Golonza, are you well?"

"Yes." Golonza shook himself and turned back to the ruined dome. A flicker of dismay crossed his stout face. "What will we do now? Descend?"

"No," Manwys shook his head. "This whole city is a labyrinth of tunnels, old buried houses, caved in rooms, dry cisterns—like this one—and hidden springs. They don't tear down buildings here, just build new on top of old . . . those

men I saw are chasing my master. If we follow them we'll just get caught ourselves." The Welshman felt like despairing but lifted his head, refusing to admit defeat. "Without knowing where he'll come out, I think . . . what?"

Golonza swallowed, his mouth tightening. "I might be able to . . . see . . . where your master is." The older man glanced sideways at Ruggero, his forehead creased by a heavy frown. "Perhaps."

Manwys' eyes flickered to the half-hidden tattoos on Golonza's wrists. "My lord, that's very dangerous here. The Church is everywhere." The Welshman stepped close, bending his head, so that only Golonza could hear him. "I thank you, and my master thanks you, but there are witchfinders under–"

"–every byre, bed, and pew." Golonza met Manwys's eyes with a bleak look. "I know." The old man shrugged down his long sleeves. His knuckles were white on the staff. "I will still try."

Manwys nodded, turning away, the bow in his arms, an arrow to the string. Ruggero was listening at the stairwell. Snow gusted out of the sky, swirling around them on invisible currents. Manwys ignored the soft chanting, the tremulous change in the air, the hackles rising on his neck. Then it stopped.

There was a cough. The Welshman turned. Golonza was still leaning on his staff, forehead pressed to the old burnished wood, sweating. "Master?"

Golonza looked up, feeling their hands on the stiff brocade of his jacket. Manwys hissed in surprise. The older man's face seemed shrunken, almost withered, his eyebrows streaked with gray.

"Not enough . . . power," Golonza said in a faint voice. "This land is . . . *aridissima*. I'm sorry. I can barely summon a flame."

Ruggero slid an arm under the old man, taking his considerable weight on thin shoulders. "We should go," hissed the little Italian. "He needs rest and food."

Manwys nodded in agreement, but his head was cocked to one side, listening.

"Wait," he whispered, then knelt at the hole. From far below, he heard stones rattle and then voices. They were faint, muffled, but he could make out the words "oriens" and then, he thought, "temple." Manwys remained still for a long moment, until he was sure that the men in the cistern were gone.

"They think my master has fled east, in some tunnel, toward the Temple." The Welshman stood, pointing with his chin at the distant snow-shrouded bulk of the Temple Mount. "Those men are going there–by a street above ground, I'll wager."

"You'll follow, then," wheezed Golonza, still leaning heavily on Ruggero. "They'll see you."

"No." Manwys shifted his satchel so that it hung before him and the bow and quiver were on his back. "Here the fast road is in the sky." He jerked his head at the terraced rooftops that stretched to the east, a jumble of houses, temples and the high wooden roofs of the Cattle Market. "They won't even notice me."

"Or us." Golonza's hand was trembling on the staff. "You've offered us shelter in your house. We owe you what little help we can give."

"Master Golonza," Manwys caught the older man's arm, concerned. "Sir Harold would never ask this of you, a guest in his hall. I should not have! Please, return to the house and rest."

"No." A brittle gleam entered the man's eyes as he looked to the east. "Lie in the dark, useless? I've had enough of that. I will come and help, if I can."

Manwys nodded, seeing some color rise in the old man's face. His desperation was like heat from a brazier. I've caught a proud, old wolf in my honorable snare. "Very well."

Ruggero was already standing on the wall separating them from the next roof. He beckoned to them, pointing downward.

"There are three of them," he whispered, flashing a brilliant grin. "They are Champagnois–I saw their blazon, a coat quartered, vermilion and yellow–"

"–with an eagle in the upper left." Manwys nodded, his heart filled with foreboding. "They are Hugh de Payen's men."

Golonza had a hand on the wall, but the catch in the Welshman's voice caught him up short. "Do you know this man?"

"Yes," Manwys said, vaulting over the wall, puzzled. "Sir Harold had an audience with him this morning, seeking admission to De Payen's order of pilgrim knights. I was going to meet my master afterward."

Icy water swirled Harold around, then slammed him into something jutting from the wall. The Saxon scrabbled at the stones, feeling courses of flattened brick go past. He couldn't get any purchase. The chill flooded through his doublet, his hose, sapping the strength of his limbs.

A light guttered overhead, flickering and throwing huge shadows on a jagged roof. Harold tried to cry out, managing only a gurgling sound. The current pushed him under a vaulted bridge and the light disappeared.

His hand, flailing above the dark water, caught on a log jutting from the wall. Harold jerked to a halt, feeling the water rush over him, dragging at his boots. Muscles burning, he reached up with his other hand and grabbed hold, dragging himself out of the racing stream.

Light blinded him, a hot orange glow, and he was gasping for breath, lying on a floor of packed rubble, water streaming out of his jerkin, his boots, and the felt vest under his armor. He coughed, spitting water, and rolled over, retching. When at last he raised his head, Harold saw that he was in a small irregular chamber.

On one side, a wall of mammoth stone blocks, each twice a man's height, closely fitted and mortised together, rose up from rubble below and vanished into rubble above. The edge of a gate could just be made out–also filled with a shattered tumulus of brick, stone, column roundels and even the chipped face of some ancient marble statue. The gate itself was a dark crevice, framed by a graceful pillar carved with vines and opened flowers.

Harold crawled to his feet, seeing that tiny scraps of papyrus and parchment were wedged between the enormous stones. Some of them were old and yellowed. Many were new, still cream-colored with sharp black ink. An oil lamp lit and burning with a faint hiss, stood on the step of the gateway. No one seemed to be around, which was very strange. The little room felt empty, abandoned. Harold supposed that the lamp's owner had fled.

The Saxon scratched his chin, then whistled in dismay,

fingers brushing habitually at his side. "Ah, that is a pity." The sword and scabbard were gone, lost in the stream. He laughed sickly to himself. *Manwys will be furious . . .*

"Your pardon," he called to the darkness, picking up the lamp. He climbed up the steps leading into the gateway. The crevice was narrow, but there was wind on his face. There was a way out, somewhere. Harold climbed through the crevice and up a sloping ramp.

Heavy, dark clouds crowded the towers rising along the city wall to the south. Manwys scuttled forward to the edge of a roof, looking down into the street that ran just under the looming mass of the Temple Mount. A crenelated battlement ran along the top of the pale limestone wall, studded with merlons and blunt towers. The Welshman eased to the lip, looking down into the street.

The Frenchmen had stopped just below him, arguing. Manwys quieted his heart, concentrating on their thick accent and muffled words.

A rattling sound interrupted their conversation. A circular stone moved in the street, then rose up, revealing a dark hole. A head appeared in the opening and the soldiers made surprised sounds of greeting. In a moment, five men had crawled out of the hole. Manwys lay very still.

A few minutes later, he rolled away from the edge of the roof and crawled back to where Golonza and Ruggero were sitting, their hoods drawn up against the snow.

"What did you see?" Golonza was drawn and tired, but he had kept up in their swift passage over the rooftops. "We heard voices."

"Yes," Manwys squatted, his breath puffing white in the chill air. "Five men came up out of a hidden tunnel and went off south in great haste." The Welshman grinned, scratching the back of his head. "They thought to trap my lord in a dead end, but he gave them a good accounting and then escaped." *By falling in a stream. What an ox!*

Golonza smiled faintly, eyes crinkling up. "Where did he go?"

"I don't know." Manwys shook his head. "But one of the men, the knight, said they should go to *les gammes de produits*."

"The stables?" Ruggero made a face. "There must be dozens of stables here in the city!"

Manwys was still smiling. Golonza raised an eyebrow. "Do you know which stables these are?"

The Welshman nodded, rising up. "There's only one stable that is underground, and that is the Stables of Solomon. They lie under the southern end of the Temple Mount."

Ruggero also rose, helping Golonza up. "Fine. How do we get there?"

"There is a gate. Do you see it?" Manwys pointed across the rooftops. Ruggero followed his gaze and saw, half-way up the massive wall of the Temple, a ramp that rose up from the streets below and entered a postern gate set in a bare face of rock. Even at this distance, he could make out the shapes of guards in white surcoats standing in the shelter of the gateway.

"Ay! How do we get there?"

"I'll have to cut across to reach it before those soldiers." Manwys looked at Golonza with a measuring eye. The wizard looked poorly. "Master Golonza, you should go back to the house. The weather is getting worse, and you're tiring. I thank you again for your efforts on my master's behalf."

The old man leaned on his staff, swallowed, and pointed with his chin. "How will you get across the street? It'll take too long to find a stair, climb down, then up again."

"It's only ten feet or so," Manwys said, settling his satchel and bowcase. "I can jump that. But you, sir, cannot. Ruggero, take your master back to the house!"

"No." Golonza drew himself up, glaring at the Welshman and the little Italian alike. "I refuse to be useless. My . . . power might be weak, but I have arms, legs, and a brave heart. You go first, then I, then Ruggero."

There was a fierce look in the old man's eye and Manwys shook his head in dismay. He regretting drawing the old man into this, but he knew the feeling well—he was growing old, too. Soon he would tire, while young Harold plunged onward, heedless in his strength.

"Then follow," he said.

Manwys gauged the distance from roof to roof, nerved himself, drew back a dozen steps and then sprinted, flat out, his heart hammering in his chest, and then kicked off, flying over the narrow canyon of the street.

Manwys hit hard, dropped, skinning his shin, then rolled up. His whole body was charged by a rush of blood. He trembled a little but turned, watching for Golonza. *Madman*, he thought briefly. *He'll fall for sure.*

The portly Italian had also drawn back a dozen steps, his face screwed up in concentration. He bent his head for a moment, hands clenched on the staff, then started his run. Manwys felt himself flinch, wanting to look away. The older man waddled forward, slowly picking up speed. From this distance, it seemed that he was talking to himself, trying to nerve himself up for the leap. The Welshman ran forward, ready to grab for the man as he jumped. Golonza rushed up, reached the edge of the opposite roof, then lunged forward. Manwys closed his eyes, a prayer on his lips. There was a whistling sound.

The Welshman opened his eyes. There had been no crash, no scream, no sickening thud on the street below. Golonza was gone. Manwys looked around in confusion. The older man was standing behind him on the rooftop, gasping for breath.

"You . . . "

Golonza managed a grin, though he looked even more drained than before. "Sometimes it works," he gasped. "Quickly now, we mustn't let them beat us inside."

Manwys failed to notice Ruggero's leap across the street, executed with effortless flair and a smooth rolling recovery once he had landed. He was too busy helping Golonza walk on suddenly rubbery legs. The little Italian frowned, then shook his head in resignation.

"This does not look good." Harold knelt, letting the lamp illuminate a thick coating of dust on the floor. The tunnel had sloped upward from the buried door. The dust was old enough to have formed rippling drifts, like windblown sand. No one's come this way in a long time.

Harold continued to trudge along the tunnel. He was not tired, though other men might have lain down by now. The air was getting warmer and the chill wetness of the stream was fading, being replaced by moist warmth. His nose twitched.

As he walked, he grumbled to himself; "The King praised me—before the court—for driving off those Saracens that attacked our caravan on the road up from the sea. Why does Sir Hugh reject me? Isn't the King's gratitude good coin?"

He kicked a fallen stone, sending it clattering before him down the passage. Though his mother would never have admitted it, he had strong good sense and a quick wit. Considering matters in the light of the French noble's perspective, he was forced to conclude that Manwys had struck down as many of the enemy. Other knights in the caravan had fought well, too.

"It has brought me nothing!" Bitterness welled up in Harold. "I came here to swear myself to the service of the Cross, yet I am rejected at every turn!"

They had come up from Joppa on the coast, two harsh days along a mountain road, rocky and dangerous. The Saracens were waiting, lying hidden in the hollow places in the mountains, laying a snare for the Christians as if they were rabbits. One moment there was nothing—only barren slopes and scrawny brush—then the bandits were upon the caravan in a mad rush! Some of the pilgrims had lagged behind, overcome with thirst and weariness. Harold had gone back, taking a skin. So many died on that road—not only the poor and weak, but also the rich and the strong. Manwys had said—his face wrapped in a cloth against the dust—that the heat slew as many as the Saracen did.

Harold sighed, his head falling to his chest. He had not asked the King to speak for him to De Payen. The spurs of knighthood were already reward enough. Harold had heard that Hugh and some other knights intended to form an Order to protect of the pilgrims flocking to Jerusalem, despite these horrors and torments. That had seemed a worthy thing to the young Saxon.

Harold stopped, his boots touching water. The tunnel ended in a spreading lake. At the edge of the lamplight, Harold could make out faint outlines of fat-bellied pillars rising into shadow.

The Frenchman's voice filled his thought. With his mind clear of anger, he heard it as if for the first time. *You are too young, untried, prey to the weaknesses of the flesh. Come back in a dozen years, when you've had your fill of the sin of the world.* Now, looking back, he pondered if it were true. *I am young.*

Cautiously, the Saxon began to wade out into the lake. He found that the floor sloped away from him and the water rose, still and dark, to his knees. After a time, with the lamp guttering, Harold was wading through water up to his chest. Luckily, the floor itself seemed smooth and whole. Rows of columns faded away on all sides. In the dim light, ancient paint was revealed—red, gold, and azure—now peeling slowly from the stone. The slow drip of water echoed like the falling of jeweler's hammers.

Suddenly, the pillars on his left and right ended. He stopped, the warm oily water lapping around his chest, and stared in each direction. It seemed that he had come to some central nave in the great chamber. After a moment's indecision, he turned left. Someone—*Manwys?*—had once told him always to bear left when lost. As he did so, heading for the line of pillars, the last of the oil in the little lamp gave out with a sigh, and he was in darkness.

"Quiet now." Manwys stepped carefully over a fallen, half-burned timber. Golonza, face pinched with exhaustion, and Ruggero were just behind him. The room was within the southern wall of the Temple Mount. They had entered the sacred precincts, as could any Christian, by paying their pilgrim's alms to the guards at the postern gate. The Frenchmen were only moments behind them. Manwys, Golonza, and Ruggero had walked away from the gate with an unhurried stride—at least until they could dart around the corner of a ruined building.

Manwys's memory of the Stables of Solomon was poor—confused visions of fire and smoke and the sound of screaming women and children. He felt ill, thinking of the horrors that he had seen during the sack of the Holy City. The victorious Crusaders had not treated the citizens with Christian mercy. The Welshman paced quickly down the passage, stepping over fallen tiles and ancient, charred beams. Huge holes gaped in the roof. He remembered a door set back in an alcove.

The panel had no lock or bar, and it squeaked aside at his touch. A warm, wet smell rose up out of the dark stairwell. "This is the way," he breathed.

They crept down the stairs. It was treacherous going. The marble steps had been worn down to shallow concave bowls filled with water. Golonza slipped twice, saved from a twisted ankle by Ruggero's quick hands. At the bottom was a broad platform of fitted stone, then steps disappearing into still black water. Warm humid air folded around them like a blanket.

"*Fiat lux*," Golonza muttered, and Manwys blinked, blinded by a sudden soft radiance that spilled from a bright point at the end of the old Italian's staff. The man looked ghastly in the clear white light, his eyes sunken pits, his cheeks hollow. Golonza was smiling, leaning like a cripple on the long haft of wood. "Better?" He asked. Manwys nodded, staring out across the noisome lake.

"Where is that boy?" He stepped down to the edge of the water. It seemed clean, but he was loath to put his boot into it. Ruggero came to his side, also frowning.

"Do they have water snakes here?" the little man asked.

Manwys scowled at the Italian, who laughed softly.

"Sorcery!" The shout was wild, almost mad with fear, and Manwys spun, startled.

Frenchmen were swarming down off of the steps, and one of them—a big black-bearded fellow with an angry purple bruise under one eye—was already upon Golonza. The old man, who had been kneeling to peer at a section of ancient mosaic, looked up in time to get a wildly swung fist in the nose. Manwys heard the crunch from where he was standing and shouted in rage.

Golonza went down hard and Ruggero bolted across the space between the lake and the Frenchmen. A dagger was already in either hand, and Manwys was right behind him, his bow half-drawn, thick fingers smoothly drawing an arrow to the string.

"You'll stop right there," shouted Blackie, dragging Golonza up from the ground. The staff, still shedding warm soft light, rolled away across the floor. Ruggero halted, though he seemed to bristle, his entire body tense. His daggers drifted in the air like the tongues of snakes. Manwys drew and sighted, the fletching just brushing against his forehead, the iron arrowhead aimed at Blackie's throat. "You'll put down that bow, and those shiny pins, or I'll crack his neck!"

The other Frenchmen, one of them limping, the other

bilious, started to spread out. Their weapons gleamed in the light. Manwys watched them from the corner of his eye, worried. The men-at-arms were sorely tried, half-furious, their pride hurt. This could get ugly.

Behind him, a quiet bumping sound suddenly ended in a splash and the clear light that had illuminated the platform went out, plunging them all into a sudden darkness. A fitful glow spread in the water, throwing wavering green lights on the vaulted roof. Immediately, a fearful shout burst from the Frenchmen, and Manwys threw himself forward, groping for Blackie. He felt Ruggero dart to one side, then the ring of metal on metal. A fist came out of the darkness and cracked against the side of Manwys's head. Stunned, he fell back, kicking. His boot caught someone and there was a high-pitched shout. Everywhere, it seemed there were men shouting and fighting.

"Hugh De Payen! I know you are here; come forward and face me!" The shout was a roar, the bellow of a strong, young ox in springtime, and it was accompanied by the brilliant return of light. Manwys rolled over, pushing a red-headed Frenchman off of him. Nearby, Ruggero was in the grips of two men, one of whom was clutching at his groin with his other hand. Harold stomped up onto the platform, dripping wet, his face grave and serious. Golonza's staff was in one hand, burning like the sun. "Hugh! Your men are rioting, attacking innocents! You must account for them!"

The Welshman stood, then ran to help Ruggero. The little Italian, his face twisted with worry, was helping the old wizard. Golonza's face was streaked with blood. Together, they helped him to where Harold stood. The young man handed the staff to Manwys, who pressed it into the old Italian's hands.

There was a rattle of boots on the stairs, then the light of lanterns. The white light flickered out. A party of older men, their faces burned dark by the Judean sun, entered in a wedge of iron mail and graying hair. They held torches and lanterns aloft. A lean-faced man, tall and strong, stepped forward and frowned at the rabble of men-at-arms, gray eyebrows rising in dismay. A greatsword was bare in his hands. Like many of the knights around him, he had come prepared for violence.

"Sir Harold. You are a bold fellow!" The man's tone was hostile. "What is this violence you've offered my men?"

"Offered?" Harold's voice was cold, but it was not angry. "Your men offered me insult, and I—like a fool—accepted your test with both fists. Is this your way, Sir Hugh, to revile men who come to you, to set ruffians upon them, to watch them from the shadows to see whether they will dance to the tune you direct?"

The French lord's face paled at the words, then flushed in anger. Manwys, quietly collecting up his bow and scattered arrows, saw pride and honesty war in that aristocratic face. There was complete quiet, then De Payen mastered himself.

"I did test you, Sir Harold. I sent men to spark your anger and then dampen its flame with violence. I had hoped to show you—in a way that the young understand—that courage is not always enough."

Manwys felt his master stiffen, and laid his hand on the brawny young arm. Harold relaxed, then nodded. "You overstep yourself, Sir Hugh. If you wish to test my strength, do so openly. I will not refuse you!" Harold stabbed a finger at Golonza. "Look at this old man—a pilgrim—one of those you are pledged to protect. He has fallen afoul of your test, now he bleeds for it. Only blind luck has kept one of us from death!"

De Payen's eyes flitted to Golonza, and Manwys saw the Frenchman's nostrils flare slightly, but the lord nodded, his lips pursed. "You speak the truth, Sir Harold. I am sorry, and I offer my apologies to all concerned. Pray, are matters between us equitable, or do you demand recompense in steel, on the field of honor?"

"I am satisfied to hear you admit your wrong." Harold said, voice still cold. "Only this morning, I bent my knee before you, seeking entrance to your Order. In my mind, I had made you the best of men, a paladin worthy of my unswerving obedience. You have tested well, Sir Hugh, but in my eyes, you have failed."

"Will you go home then?" Harold paused. Hugh's voice had lost its antagonism. "Back to England, I mean."

"No, I will not." Harold felt a brief flicker of anger. "In my heart, I have pledged myself to protect the helpless—I do not need a temporal master to guide me. These are wild lands, filled with dangers at every turn. There is plenty of work for my blade. Perhaps I am too young. You and your companions are veteran knights. You may see what I do not. But I will not turn aside from my path, no matter what you might think."

The Frenchman nodded slowly, leaning on the hilt of his greatsword. "If," he said, "I offer you a place with us, will you take it?"

Harold laughed, incredulous. "With only the passage of a day, I have found wisdom? You offer me a bone, sir, a sop to your pride." He paused, looking at Manwys. The old squire was hiding a grin, and his eyes were merry. Behind him, the two Italians were looking on with interest. The old man, hand clasped firmly around the head of his staff, met his eyes for a moment. They were deep and glittered like blue stars. Harold felt an almost physical shock, and the man nodded slowly.

"No," the young Saxon said, turning back to Hugh. "I will not take a place among your pilgrim knights. Not today."

"But someday," Hugh said, sheathing his blade and turning away. "You will sit at my table, and we will bow our heads to God together." The lean old Frenchman gestured to his men and they stomped away, some looking back over their shoulders, still glowering. Blackie bit his thumb at Harold as he passed, but the young Saxon did not show any response. Poxy and Red helped each other up the steps.

When they were gone, Harold sighed in relief.

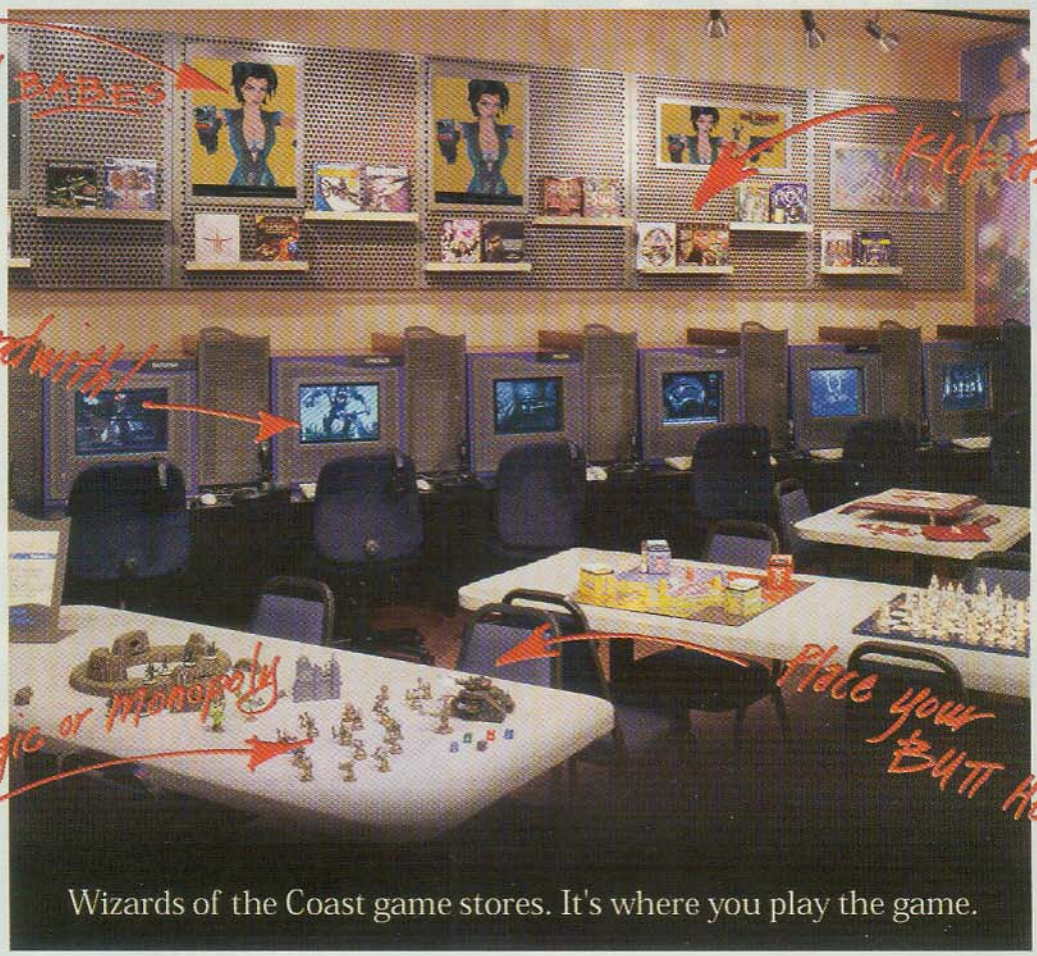
"Well done, lad." Manwys wrapped a muscular arm around his master's shoulder, then bent his head down to Harold's. For a moment, they stood, forehead to forehead, embracing. Then the Welshman stood back a little, grinned, and said, "Well, my lord, we have guests for dinner. The honorable Golonza di Barati and his manservant, Ruggero."

"Well met," Harold said, clasping hands with the old Italian, and nodding to the little man. "Thank you for looking after my old, decrepit squire. I will repay you by not cooking our dinner myself!"

For more adventure in Thomas Harlan's world of historical fantasy, check out "Mysterious Ways," a D&D adventure in *Dungeon Magazine* #86.

If you build it, they will come.

WE BUILT IT!

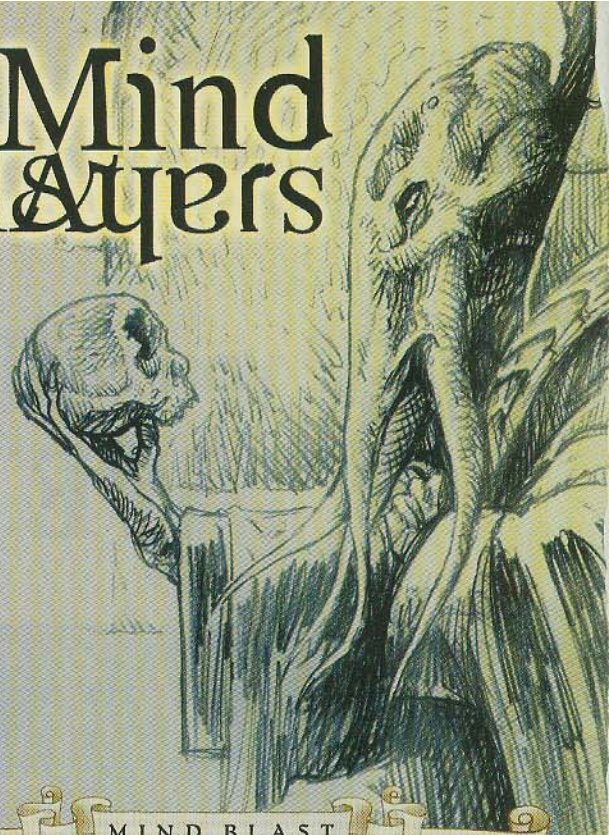


Wizards of the Coast game stores. It's where you play the game.

www.wizards.com/gamestores

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2001 Wizards.

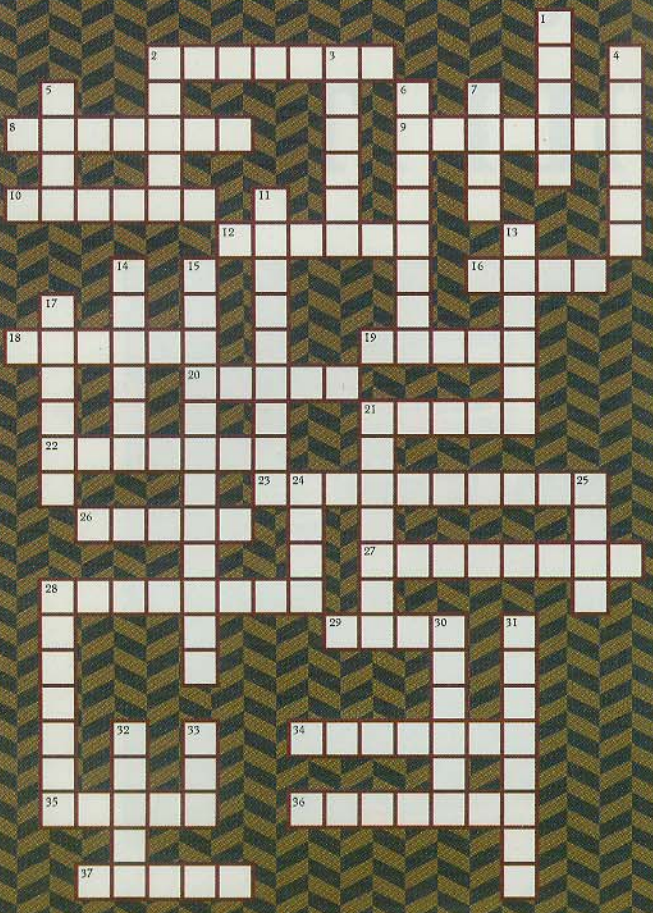
Mind flayers



no. 24

by Mike Selinker

The crossword below requires you to fill in the blanks in the clues with the names associated with the items and spells given. In all cases, the blanks are to be filled in with proper names, ignoring spaces and punctuation.



ACROSS

2 ____'s Lamentable Belaborment
8 ____'s Telekinetic Sphere
9 Cup and Talisman of ____
10 ____'s Blessed Book
12 Iron Flask of ____ the Merciless
16 ____'s Acid Arrow
18 ____'s Transformation
19 ____'s Uncontrollable Hideous Laughter
20 ____'s Instant Fortress
21 ____'s Black Tentacles
22 Quiver of ____
23 Teeth of ____
26 ____'s Feather Token
27 Chariot of ____
28 ____'s Everfull Purse
29 Talisman of ____
34 Apparatus of ____
35 Wand of ____
36 ____'s Mask
37 ____'s Flowing Flagon

DOWN

1 ____'s Interposing Hand
2 Mighty Servant of ____
3 ____'s Marvelous Pigments
4 ____'s Quill
5 ____'s Irresistible Dance
6 ____'s Hut
7 Ring of ____
11 Machine of ____
13 ____'s Handy Haversack
14 ____'s Magic Aura
15 ____'s Lucubration
17 ____'s Spell Immunity
21 Queen ____'s Marvelous Nightingale
24 Invulnerable Coat of ____
25 ____'s Mnemonic Enhancer
28 Iron Bands of ____
30 Recorder of ____
31 Mace of ____
32 Hand of ____
33 Sword of ____

MIND BLAST

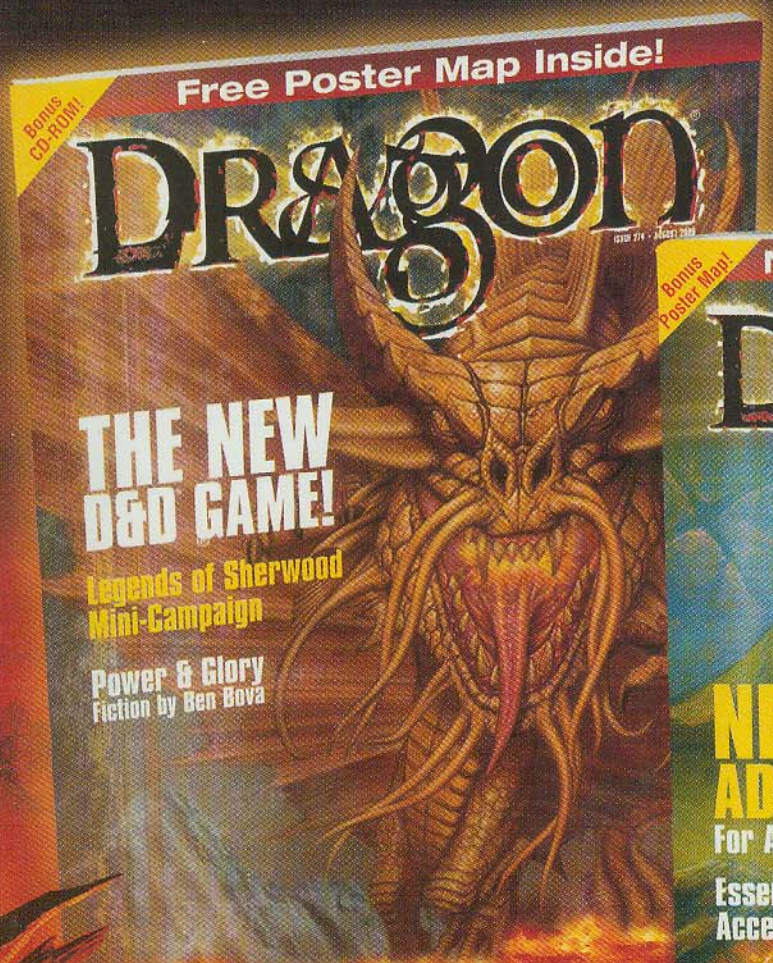
*B*oth the rakshasa and the dark naga have three occurrences of their only vowel, an A. Name the only other creature from the *Monster Manual* table of contents that has three occurrences of its only vowel—and it isn't an A.

You can find the solution to this *MIND BLAST* on page 68

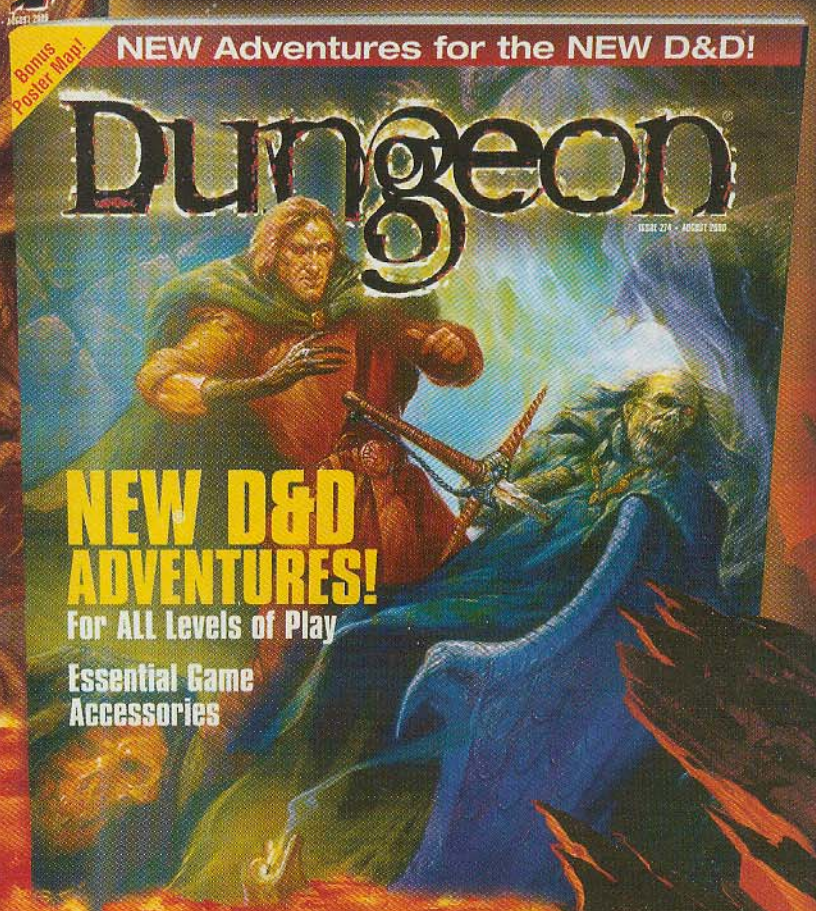
no. 23 SOLUTION

Give Your Game The Edge

With the Official Dungeons & Dragons Magazines!



Dragon Magazine
Roleplaying Strategy
Dungeon Master Advice
New D&D Rules



Dungeon Magazine
Fantastic D&D Modules
Maps of Mystery
Side Treks—One-Night Adventures

1-800-395-7760 dragon@pcsbublink.com and dungeon @ pcspublink.com
order online at www.wizards.com/dragon/dungeon

Dragon, Dungeon, Dungeons & Dragons, and D&D are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast. © 2000 Wizards of the Coast

CAMPAIGN CORNER

Welcome to the first installment of our new monthly collection of adventure hooks. Longtime players will recognize the settings described on the following pages. Even if you're not a veteran of such exotic locales as the Land of Fate, the Demiplane of Dread, or the far reaches of Realmspace, most of these handouts work equally well in your current campaign. Clip the handout from the magazine and hand it to your players. Then use the suggestions under "For the Dungeon Master" or invent your own story behind the image.

Do you have adventure hooks from any D&D campaign, past or present? Share them by sending your submissions to the magazine address, no query letter required. Include a big SASE and the standard disclosure form (available at www.wizards.com).

GREYHAWK® ACCESSORY

by Bruce R. Cordell

FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

A missive meant for a librarian in Greyhawk City's Great Library accidentally finds its way to a PC (perhaps while that PC is in or near the Great Library doing research). The seal on the missive is purple wax stamped with what looks like a stylized tadpole with four tails. The famed Yellow Tome, as any sage can tell the PCs, is a valuable book kept in one of the three underground library vaults. Though few are allowed to see it, it purportedly contains lore of psionics, mind flayers, and a secret so terrible that merely reading it has driven people insane.

Investigating PCs might discover a corrupt librarian known as Voronis, and the date of the secret rendezvous point in a reading room off the first Library Vault. If their investigations are not dissuaded by assassins, the PCs finally have the opportunity to fight a desperate battle in the bowels of the Great Library against a group of illithids intent on obtaining the book.

OTHER OPTIONS:

- There's no reason you can't use this note in a different campaign. Perhaps your characters find it in the halls of Candlekeep (Forgotten Realms) or at the bazaar in Huzuz (Al-Qadim).
- The illithids might have control of a nautiloid (Spelljammer), or perhaps the Yellow Tome is cursed to send its readers to the Demiplane of Dread (Ravenloft).

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

by Rob Heinsoo

FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

Put these sketches into your players' hands as pages they've found floating loose in a defeated evil wizard's spellbook. Most Forgotten Realms characters will recognize the first sketch as a picture of Mystra, the goddess of magic.

Worshippers of Mystra, or PCs such as bards, will recognize it as a depiction of an icon that has recently been added to a major temple of Mystra. The icon is reputed to have magical powers.

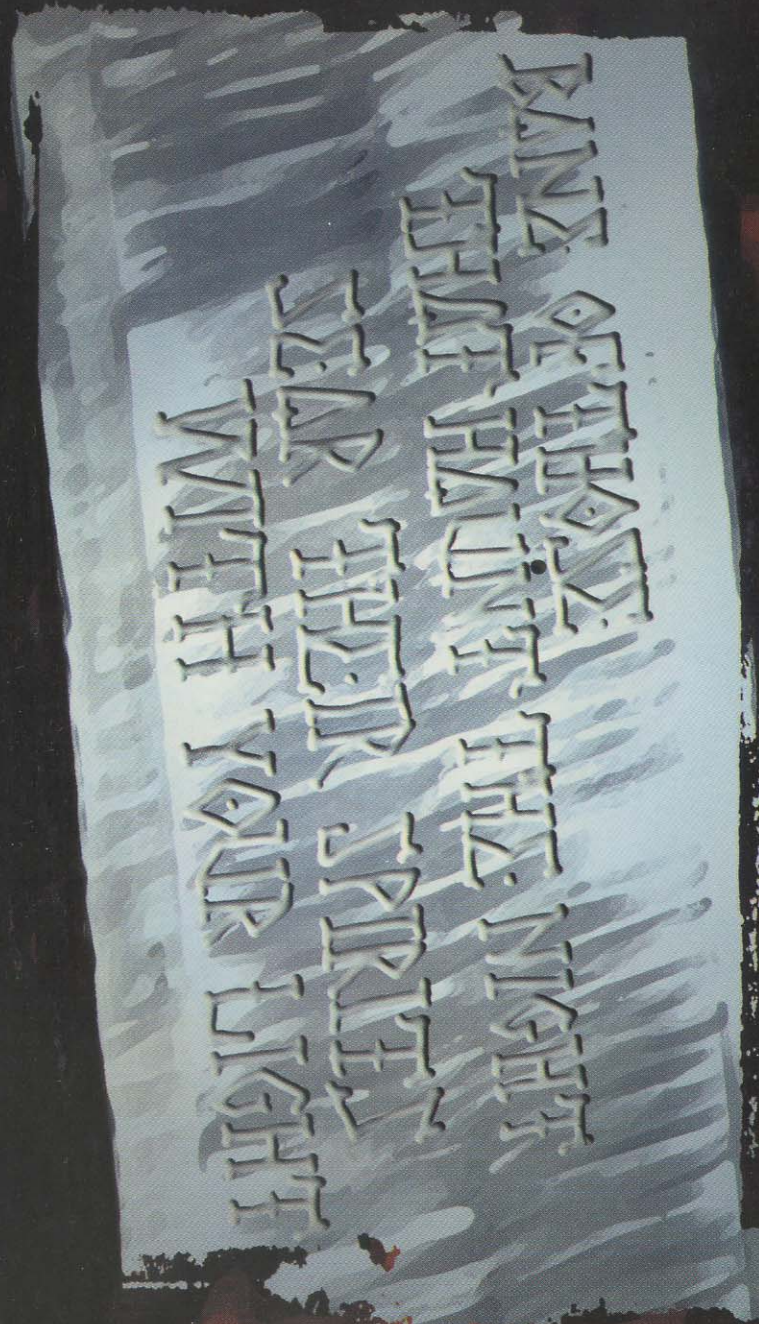
The second sketch, showing a shadowy figure within the image of Mystra, and a star field, offers hints about what sketches of a Mystran icon are doing in an evil wizard's spellbook. Is the image within the icon a representation of an enemy god or a fiend that will come to life and bring ill fortune to Mystra's congregation?

The PCs must reach the temple by Mystra's High Holy Day, the 15th of Marpenoth, or the evil will be released. Will the PCs be able to convince the Mystran priests of the icon's booby-traps, or will the icon be triggered and force more drastic action?

OTHER OPTIONS:

- The evil wizard was an unwitting dupe in a larger ploy, some demonstration of Mystra's magical power meant to demonstrate the mystic transformation of the mortal wizard Midnight into the Mother of All Magic.
- Perhaps a number of fiends are trapped beneath the layers of enchanted paint, waiting only for some fool to scratch away their magical bonds before they are released.
- Maybe the sketches are a clue about the corruption of a presumed-good cleric of Mystra. When the heroes arrive at the temple and find no icon similar to the one in the drawing, they might do well to shadow the high priestess, who lately has been prone to long, late-night strolls.

Most Esteemed Librarian V.,
The Creed thanks you for your kind offer. We accept. Expect a delegate from our number to arrive at the designated time—be certain that the security spells and wards are properly deactivated. We look forward to the trade, which will be of great benefit to us both. Make sure the Yellow Tome is with you when we arrive, so that we may all avoid any unnecessary unpleasantness.
Sincerely,
He-Who-Speaks-With-Thralls
Mayenoth 15



High Priestess Jamarapal,

Our Lord Hamanu's intuition is infallible. The interrogation of that aged thrixreen, Cho Tix, was quite rewarding.

She apparently worked for the Veiled Alliance years ago.

She admitted knowing Korgunard, the so-called Great One.

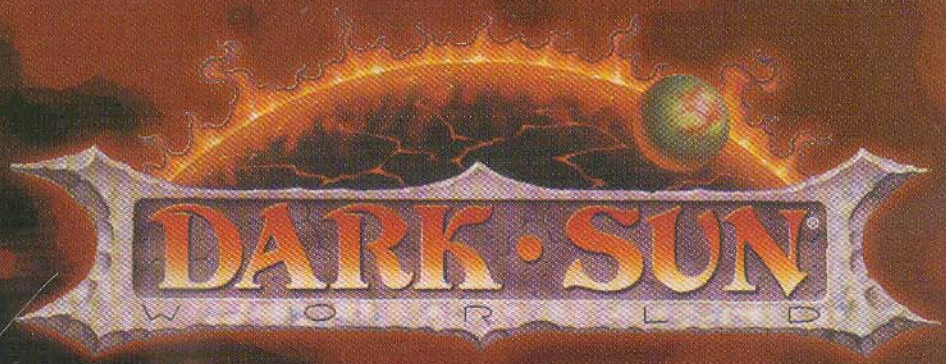
With some persuasion, she surprised me by claiming the Great One had a 'packmate' elf named Xaymon.

Alas, our time together was short.

The thrixreen was too weak to withstand further interrogation.

Are we to assume this elf was a pupil? If so, our king might be interested in meeting him. Should any legacy of Korgunard exist, Lord Hamanu must know about it.

Humbly, I await your direction – Khabur



by Ed Bonny

FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

However the PCs acquire this note, they learn it was written recently. Urik's templars are already searching for Xaymon. Korgunard's legacy is no light matter, and concerned PCs should want to keep it from Hamanu.

A wandering brown elf, Xaymon (13th level psi/wiz) was indeed a preserver apprentice of Korgunard. Xaymon owns the only artifact that Korgunard ever created—a ring-shaped, artifact-like spellbook with a minor array of magic and psionic abilities. Any good-aligned owner of the spellbook, regardless of race, gains the ability to transform into an avangion provided he has the required class levels and the preserver *metamorphosis* spell.

Xaymon takes the legacy that Korgunard has bestowed upon him with deadly seriousness. Until now, the elf existed in relative anonymity. A solitary figure who trusts few, Xaymon possesses many of Korgunard's secrets. For one, he claimed the avangion's hidden keep for himself. In time, Xaymon hopes to be Athas's next avangion.

The heroes discover the note in the ruins of a raided caravan, a rogue character acquires the note when picking a templar's pocket, or a wounded member of the Veiled Alliance presses it into a PC's hands before dying.

The heroes must race to reach Xaymon before Hamanu's forces. If they reach him first, they can warn him of an attack. If they arrive just in time, they can help defend him from the templars. If late, they might choose to recover the spellbook from the murderous templars.

If the PCs befriend the preserver, Xaymon can be a powerful ally turning up unexpectedly much as Korgunard did. He might even act as a mentor to less experienced preservers.

OTHER OPTIONS:

- The note is a ruse to entrap those sympathetic to Korgunard's cause. Lord Hamanu's forces await any sign of people looking for Xaymon.

FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

This rubbing appears on the back of a map that clearly shows the location of an old barrow-mound (in whatever region best suits your campaign). It looks like the rubbing of an engraving on a sword. Player characters might be motivated to search out this sword for use against an undead or lycanthrope menace. What they find in the old barrow might not be what they expected, however.

OTHER OPTIONS:

- While the sword is everything the characters hope (a *+1 holy ghost touch bastard sword*), the mound is guarded by undead that must be fought before the sword can be claimed. Alternatively, the sword could be clutched firmly in the grasp of a stone golem who fiercely resists any attempt to remove it.

- The sword could contain the ghost of the paladin who carried it in life, a powerful spirit with horrific appearance and corrupting gaze. The ghost must be laid to rest (by completing whatever quest the paladin gave his life for) before another hero can wield the sword.

- The rubbing could actually be from the lid of a stone sarcophagus within the barrow, rather than the actual sword. Though the dead knight remains within the sarcophagus, his sword does not. Perhaps he was not buried with it, and his son still carries it in battle with the undead. Or perhaps the sword was looted years ago. The barrow might still contain some useful information, or lead the characters on another adventure.

- Since the rubbing appears on the back of the map, it's easy to place this sword in any campaign world. In the GREYHAWK campaign, the sword might be a relic of Pelor; in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, it could be an artifact of the temple of Lathander.

CLASS ACTS

DRAGONKITH

by Monte Cook · illustrated by Damon Brown

Dragons are primal forces in the world. Their might draws others to them almost as much as it drives creatures away in fear. Being the ally of a dragon is a sure way to guarantee power and prestige.

Dragonkith are creatures that serve and aid dragons. They live with or near a dragon or group of dragons, acting as servants or peers (depending on the individual dragon and the dragonkith). In return for service, over time, the dragon bestows upon them special abilities—and even physical changes—using complex rituals known only to their kind.

Although sometimes they are humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, or gnomes, dragonkith are just as often members of other intelligent species, such as lizardfolk, giants, troglodytes, lammasu, pseudodragons, titans, dragonnes, beholders, lamias, and others—even, rarely, other dragons. Thus, dragonkith are a diverse group; no one class is more likely to become one, and many dragonkith do not have classes at all (they are monsters).

NPC dragonkith are usually found in the company of their dragon companion. Sometimes they are alone, completing some errand for the dragon. Occasionally they work in small, tight-knit groups of dragonkith, all pledged either to the same dragon or to allied dragons.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The dragonkith is proficient with no weapons, and no armor or shields.

Scales: The dragonkith, over time, develops crusty scales the same color as her dragon companion. At first level, this adds +1 to the natural armor of the dragonkith, increasing by an additional +1 every three levels. If the dragonkith already has natural armor as an aspect of her creature type (and not a spell or magic item), this bonus adds to her normal natural armor.

Telepathic Plea: Wherever the dragonkith is, her dragon companion can send an instantaneous, telepathic plea for help whenever it wishes. No details are provided other than that the dragon is in danger. This communication does not work both ways (the dragonkith cannot alert the dragon). This is a supernatural ability.

Energy Resistance: The dragonkith develops a growing immunity to the dragon's breath weapon. Beginning at 3rd level, the dragonkith can ignore some of the damage of the type generated by her dragon companion's breath weapon. Note that this ability applies to sources of the energy type other than the dragon companion's breath weapon. Thus, a dragonkith of a red dragon gains fire resistance 5 at 3rd level to fire from any source. This ability increases at 7th level to 10 points and at 9th level to 15 points. In the case of dragons with multiple breath weapons, the dragonkith is resistant to one type

DRAGONKITH — HIT DIE D8

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Scales (natural armor +1), danger sense
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Mighty attack +1d6
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	*Detect treasure*, energy resistance
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Scales (natural armor +2), telepathic link
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Mighty attack +2d6
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	Sorcerous knack
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Scales (natural armor +3), energy resistance 10
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	Mighty attack +3d6
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	Energy resistance 15, share spells
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Scales (natural armor +4)

Answer to Mind Blast: SUCCUBUS (another such creature, the illithid, is not listed in the table of contents, as it is another name for mind flayer).

Answer to Mind Blast: SUCCUBUS (another such creature, the illithid, is not listed in the table of contents, as it is another name for mind flayer).

CLASS SKILLS					
Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier					
The flame steward's class skills (organized by key ability) are:					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
			Craft Knowledge (any) Search	Listen Profession Spot	Bluff Diplomacy Intimidate

of damaging breath. This is a supernatural ability.

Mighty Attack: At 2nd level, once per day, the dragonkith can call upon her dragon's might to deal +1d6 additional damage to a single attack. The dragonkith must decide before an attack is resolved whether she will use this power. If the attack misses, that use of the mighty attack is wasted. Every three levels afterward, the damage increases by +1d6. This is a supernatural ability.

Detect Treasure: Once per day, as a spell-like ability, the 3rd level dragonkith can *detect treasure*. This works like the *detect magic* spell except that it senses objects Medium-size or smaller that are worth more than 100 gp. On the first round, she detects the presence of such objects; on the second round, the power reveals the number of objects and the location of each. On each additional round, the dragonkith can estimate the value of one object, within a 100-gp margin.

Telepathic Link: The dragonkith has a telepathic link with the dragon out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The dragonkith and dragon can communicate telepathically. Because of this link, one has the same connection to an item or place that the other does. For instance, if the dragonkith has seen a room, her dragon companion can teleport into that room as if she had seen it too. This is a supernatural ability.

Sorcerous Knack: At 6th level, the dragonkith acquires the supernatural ability to cast a single arcane spell once per day as a sorcerer of her class level. The dragonkith must choose a spell known to her dragon companion, and she must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level to learn it with the sorcerous knack. Once the spell is chosen, it can never be changed. Spells learned with the sorcerous knack are spell-like abilities.

Share Spells: At either the dragon's or the dragonkith's option, any spell one casts on herself also affects the other. The two must be touching at the time. If the spell has a duration other than instantaneous, the spell stops affecting them if they move farther than 100 feet apart. The spell's effect will not be restored even if they return to each other before the duration would otherwise have ended. The dragon and dragonkith can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of their respective types. This is a supernatural ability. D

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a dragonkith, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Language: Draconic
Base Attack Bonus: +6
Knowledge (arcana): 4 ranks
Feats: Alertness, Endurance
Special: Must be chosen by a dragon of the same alignment. If they ever cease their relationship with the dragon, or their dragon dies, dragonkith lose all special abilities from this prestige class.
Special: The feats and skills present in monster descriptions in the *Monster Manual* are for average individuals. It is permissible (and simple) to switch out skills and feats so that many interesting creatures can fulfill these requirements. Advancing a creature or giving it a standard character class might also allow the creature to fulfill the requirements.

by Julia Martin & Eric Haddock

MAGISTRATI

The specialty priests of *Faiths & Avatars* illustrated what could be done to custom-craft clerics for the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. They gave priests of different faiths a distinctiveness that was missing in the generic cleric. However, they were unbalanced. Some rocked, some sucked, and some detracted from the unique flavor of other classes.

The new D&D game restores the core abilities of the cleric while giving them the feel of specialty priests through the use of domains. It also allows for a breadth of character customizability through the new multiclassing rules, the addition of feats and skills, and prestige classes. In converting to the new D&D, DMs and players might be tempted to take

Azuth: Magistrati

The magistrati (singular: magistrata) are prime candidates to be simulated with multiclassing.

• The alignment (LN, which matches Azuth's alignment) and weapons of the old magistrati specialty priest are covered by the new cleric with no modification.

• The old magistrati could not wear armor. Congratulations! In the new edition, you are not obligated to eschew armor, but it does throw a wrench into things because you are going to multiclass into wizard, and armor means a spell failure chance for any arcane spell with a somatic component. So pursuing other options to increase your Armor Class is still your best option. If you're making a new character, think about putting a good ability score into Dexterity.

• For domains, pick Law and Spell to get a cool combination of offensive capability and flexibility in your domain spells, as well as reflect the stern and lawful nature of Azuth. (The Spell domain is covered in the new *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*.) The Spell domain grants a +2 bonus on Concentration and Spellcraft checks, as well as access to *anyspell* and *greater anyspell* as domain spells. Law gives you law spells at +1 caster level and a really good mix of defensive and offensive spells. Magic is also a strong option, especially since the domain grants you a boost in wizard caster level when using some magic items. Knowledge is also viable, but the granted power is not useful since you are going to be multiclassing as a wizard.

• Now decide whether to turn or rebuke undead, and how you spontaneously cast spells. The *Player's Handbook* allows neutral clerics to pick whether they are more proficient with channeling positive energy or negative energy. The old magistrati turned undead and never commanded them. The new information on Azuth's church doesn't dwell on this. You might be inclined toward turning undead, but you could be a darker (or more "pragmatic") priest of Azuth and go the other route, especially if you want to be a Necromancy specialist.

• The old special ability to use wizard scrolls as well as priest scrolls is covered as soon as you take your first wizard level. The special ability to identify magic items by touch is replaced by access to the *identify* spell (this is more balanced), unless you take Divination as a prohibited school. To simulate the bonus to casting time magistrati used to get, take Quicken Spell as your first feat. Consider taking other metamagic feats, especially Spell Mastery followed by Signature Spell (found in the new *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*).

• Most of the other special abilities of the magistrati class focused around watered-down specialized wizard capabilities. To simulate those, multiclass as a specialized wizard. A wizard can summon a familiar as an additional benefit that magistrati didn't get before. To approximate the old magistrati, aim for an even ratio of cleric to wizard levels until you reach 7th level as a wizard; then advance just as a cleric. Unless you are a human, elf, or half-elf, you'll need to keep the levels even or take an experience-point penalty. The rest of the special abilities of the old magistrati were the ability to cast additional spells: one *magic missile;* one *fireball* or *lightning bolt;* and one of the wall spells once a day (depending on the magistrati's level). These abilities are easily simulated by taking Evocation or Conjuration as your school specialization. You then can take those spells as the extra spell of each spell level that you get for specializing.

WATCHERS

those specialty priests and transfer them each into a prestige class. Our advice: Don't.

Instead, try to use the tools provided by the new system. You're more likely to come out with a more focused and balanced character. Start by looking for the core concept of the specialty priest. Often, the Forgotten Realms specialty priests were clerics with a touch of something else—a little fighter, some wizard, some rogue, or even some bard. Let's look at two examples of how to get most of the functionality and flavor of the old class without going to all the trouble of making a new prestige class.

THE MAGISTRATI MULTICLASS PATH

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Avg hp	Abilities Gained or Taken
1	Clr 1	+0	+2	+0	+2	8	0 and 1st-level cleric spells, turn or rebuke undead, Law and Spell domains, Quicken Spell
2	Clr 1/Wiz 1	+0	+2	+0	+4	10	0 and 1st-level wizard spells, summon familiar, Scribe Scroll, specialize as an Evoker or Conjurer to get extra spells
3	Clr 2/Wiz 1	+1	+3	+0	+5	14	Feat
4	Clr 2/Wiz 2	+2	+3	+0	+6	17	Ability increase
5	Clr 3/Wiz 2	+3	+3	+1	+6	21	2nd-level cleric spells
6	Clr 3/Wiz 3	+3	+4	+2	+6	24	2nd-level wizard spells, feat
7	Clr 4/Wiz 3	+4	+5	+2	+7	28	
8	Clr 4/Wiz 4	+5	+5	+2	+8	31	Ability increase
9	Clr 5/Wiz 4	+5	+5	+2	+8	35	3rd-level cleric spells, feat
10	Clr 5/Wiz 5	+5	+5	+2	+8	38	3rd-level wizard spells, take Spell Mastery as a bonus wizard feat
11	Clr 6/Wiz 5	+6/+1	+6	+3	+9	42	
12	Clr 6/Wiz 6	+7/+2	+7	+4	+10	45	Take Signature Spell as a feat, ability increase
13	Clr 7/Wiz 6	+8/+3	+7	+4	+10	49	4th-level cleric spells
14	Clr 7/Wiz 7	+8/+3	+7	+4	+10	52	4th-level wizard spells
15	Clr 8/Wiz 7	+9/+4	+8	+4	+11	56	Take Signature Spell as a feat again
16	Clr 9/Wiz 7	+9/+4	+8	+5	+11	61	5th-level cleric spells, ability increase
17	Clr 10/Wiz 7	+10/+5	+9	+5	+12	65	
18	Clr 11/Wiz 7	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+12	70	6th-level cleric spells, feat
19	Clr 12/Wiz 7	+12/+7/+2	+10	+6	+13	74	
20	Clr 13/Wiz 7	+12/+7/+2	+10	+6	+13	79	7th-level cleric spells, ability increase

Helm: Watchers

• The alignment (LN, which matches Helm's LN), armor, and weapons of the old watcher specialty priest are covered by the new cleric with no modification.

• For domains, pick Protection and Planning, although taking Law would also mesh well with Helm. Strength, the other option for a cleric of Helm, doesn't simulate the old watcher as well. The Planning domain is described in the new *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. Planning grants the Extend Spell feat as a domain ability, and gives you a lot of Divination domain spells that emphasize the watching part of being a watcher. Protection grants the *protective ward* domain ability and versatile protective domain spells.

• Again, the *Player's Handbook* normally allows neutral clerics to pick whether they are more proficient with channeling positive energy or negative energy. The old watchers turned undead and never commanded them. The new information on Helm's church states that his clerics never command undead, so spontaneously casting *cure* spells and turning undead are the way to go.

• To simulate the bonus to surprise that watchers used to get, pick Alertness as your first feat. Take Blind-Fight as your next available feat to round out what used to be one of the standard bonus nonweapon proficiencies for watchers.

• Other special abilities of the watcher class focused on watered down fighter capabilities. To simulate that, take levels of fighter at some time during your career. Taking four levels allows you to specialize in a weapon, but taking more than three can significantly slow your spell progression. Try taking just two levels of fighter instead.

• If your character is Medium-size, taking your first level of fighter also covers the proficient use of Helm's favored weapon, the bastard sword—a martial weapon if used two-handed. You'll need to take the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword) feat if you want to wield it one-handed.

• The old multiple attack special abilities of the watcher are subsumed into the ability of all classes to gain more attacks per round as their attack bonus exceeds +5. The more levels of fighter you take, the faster you get there, of course.

• Many of the spells that watchers used to get as special abilities remain unconverted in the new edition of D&D, but their functionality is well covered by standard spells in the *Player's Handbook*. The new ability of clerics to spontaneously cast allows them to pray for more spells than before anyway. This ability preserves the flavor of those lost specific abilities.

SKILL SYNERGIES

REFERENCE CHART

THIS SKILL . . .	GIVES A SYNERGY BONUS TO THIS SKILL.
Animal Empathy	Handle Animal (with animals; 9 ranks in Handle Animal gives you the bonus with beasts)
Bluff	Diplomacy
	Disguise (when you know you are observed and are acting in character)
	Innuendo (when transmitting a message)
	Intimidate
	Pick Pockets
Decipher Script	Use Magic Device (when deciphering scrolls)
Escape Artist	Use Rope (when binding someone else)
Handle Animal	Ride
Intuit Direction	Wilderness Lore (to avoid getting lost)
Jump	Tumble
Profession (herbalist)	Heal
Sense Motive	Diplomacy
	Innuendo (to intercept messages)
Spellcraft	Use Magic Device (when deciphering scrolls)
Tumble	Balance
	Jump
Use Magic Device	Spellcraft (when deciphering scrolls)
Use Rope	Climb (when using a rope)
	Escape Artist (escaping rope bonds)

THE WATCHER MULTICLASS PATH

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Avg hp	Abilities Gained or Taken
1	Clr 1	+0	+2	+0	+2	8	0 and 1st-level cleric spells, turn undead, Protection and Planning domains, free Extend Spell feat, Alertness
2	Clr 1/Ftr 1	+1	+4	+0	+2	13	Take Blind-Fight as a bonus fighter feat, martial weapon proficiency in all martial weapons
3	Clr 2/Ftr 1	+2	+5	+0	+3	18	Feat
4	Clr 2/Ftr 2	+3	+6	+0	+3	23	Ability increase, take Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword) as a bonus fighter feat
5	Clr 3/Ftr 2	+4	+6	+1	+3	28	2nd-level cleric spells
6	Clr 4/Ftr 2	+5	+7	+1	+4	32	Feat
7	Clr 5/Ftr 2	+5	+7	+1	+4	37	3rd-level cleric spells
8	Clr 6/Ftr 2	+6/+1	+8	+2	+5	41	Ability increase
9	Clr 7/Ftr 2	+7/+2	+8	+2	+5	46	4th-level cleric spells, feat
10	Clr 8/Ftr 2	+8/+3	+9	+2	+6	50	
11	Clr 9/Ftr 2	+8/+3	+9	+3	+6	55	5th-level cleric spells
12	Clr 10/Ftr 2	+9/+4	+10	+3	+7	59	Feat, ability increase
13	Clr 11/Ftr 2	+10/+5	+10	+3	+7	64	6th-level cleric spells
14	Clr 12/Ftr 2	+11/+6/+1	+11	+4	+8	68	
15	Clr 13/Ftr 2	+11/+6/+1	+11	+4	+8	73	7th-level cleric spells, feat
16	Clr 14/Ftr 2	+12/+7/+2	+12	+4	+9	77	Ability increase
17	Clr 15/Ftr 2	+13/+8/+3	+12	+5	+9	82	8th-level cleric spells
18	Clr 16/Ftr 2	+14/+9/+4	+13	+5	+10	86	Feat
19	Clr 17/Ftr 2	+14/+9/+4	+13	+5	+10	91	9th-level cleric spells
20	Clr 18/Ftr 2	+15/+10/+5	+14	+6	+11	95	Ability increase

Because having some skills gives you a bonus when using other skills, you should consider the effects of these synergies when creating your character. If you plan to use Climb or Escape Artist, you'd do well to add ranks to Use Rope as well. Having high ranks in Bluff, Sense Motive, Diplomacy, Innuendo, Intimidate, and Pick Pockets can make a great package of mutually supporting skills. Here's a handy chart to make your skill selection easier:

Note that all synergy bonuses are +2. They also require 5 ranks in a skill to function with one exception, which is noted below.

THIS SKILL . . .	GETS A SYNERGY BONUS FROM THIS SKILL.
Balance	Tumble
Climb (with a rope)	Use Rope
Diplomacy	Bluff
	Sense Motive
Disguise (observed and in character)	Bluff
Escape Artist (escape rope bonds)	Use Rope
Handle Animal (with animals; 9 ranks for bonus with beasts)	Animal Empathy
Heal	Profession (herbalist)
Innuendo (transmit messages)	Bluff

THIS SKILL . . .	GETS A SYNERGY BONUS FROM THIS SKILL.
Innuendo (intercept messages)	Sense Motive
Intimidate	Bluff
Jump	Tumble
Pick Pockets	Bluff
	(scrolls only) Spellcraft
Ride	Handle Animal
Spellcraft (decipher scrolls)	Use Magic Device
Tumble	Jump
Use Magic Device	Decipher Script
(decipher scrolls)	Spellcraft
Wilderness Lore	Intuit Direction
(avoid getting lost)	

ELMISTER'S GUIDE to the REALMS

Lost places, familiar haunts, and strange sites in the lands of Faerûn.

MRELGAUNT'S TURRET

by Ed Greenwood · illustrated by David Day

In a wooded ravine northeast of Everlund, above a small, nameless stream, floats a foresters' landmark few have seen. Mrelgaunt's Turret is a crumbling tower lacking its lower levels—they've fallen away to leave the upper floors held aloft by enchantments that could fail at any time.

Once the home of the reclusive, studious wizard Mrelgaunt, the Turret is today a haunted ruin. The collapse of its lower levels happened almost a century ago, of unknown causes.

The few adventuring bands who've reached the floating tower report that unseen Mrelgaunt, now a ghost, whispers fell secrets to those who venture into his uppermost room. No civilized beings dwell nearby, and the wild forest and rugged topography makes sighting the Turret from afar difficult.

The cylindrical Turret is topped by a conical, taper-sloped, slate-shingled roof surmounted by a bare flagstaff. Birds shun the dark, floating tower. They refuse even to fly into it, let alone perch or nest on or in it.

The stones of the Turret's circular foundation are awash in the stream, rising out of the waters like stony fingers to enclose a small, constant whirlpool whose clockwise flow drags down small creatures and stream-borne items, drawing them into the unseen tower cellars. There's no way out but back up through the whirling waters, and there's no air space below. Beside the whirlpool rises the only possible handhold for weak swimmers: a circular stone stair that climbs a few steps up into the air and then breaks off.

Writings preserved in Silverymoon record that Aulstaer Mrelgaunt was born in southern Tethyr of wealthy merchant stock almost four hundred years ago. At an early age he showed a grasp of the Art, wielding magic with astonishing maturity. Certain folk sought to make the boy their servant-mage, but he saw through their ruses and slipped away with a passing caravan, seeking fabled Candlekeep.

What then befell him is lost to scribes, but despite never entering that seashore enclave, Mrelgaunt somehow acquired many tomes of magic, a broad and cultured learning, and a love of research that became the ruling passion of his life; he devoted his time to acquiring knowledge rather than taking an active part in the wider world.

At least the last four decades of Mrelgaunt's life were spent in this tower, studying and modifying spells. Far more than most human mages, he came to understand the ways in which magic harnesses natural forces, enabling him to modify spells "on the fly." It's said that even now, as little more than a voice, he can hurl spells that precisely meet the weaknesses of those who try to despoil his tower or carry away its contents. All accounts agree, however, that the whispering voice in the uppermost room of the Turret seems lonely and eager to speak with those venturing into the ruin, imparting advice rather than seeking battle.

Mrelgaunt's knowledge of passing history ends (with a few exceptions, presumably learned from visitors) about two hundred years ago, when he apparently died or passed into undeath. He gives no coherent answers about his passing or where his magic is stored. Perhaps he no longer knows such things, but he is eager to explain the intricacies of arcane spells of low and middling levels, identify items shown to him, and impart the locations of long-dead sages and caches of lost magic.

He apparently relishes the role of confidant and confessor to wizards who are actively adventuring or grappling with mysteries of magic, and he has carried on friendships with mages for years, sometimes guarding items they leave with him, and in return asking only for news of advances in the Art.

Mrelgaunt can confirm that dwarves (led by a short, redbearded stonecutter calling himself "Haelburt Downdelve") built the Turret for him and that Mrelgaunt himself cast the spells that preserved it and its furnishings. However, he remains vague about the magic he used. Certain answers he's given in the past suggest he might have forfeited or even traded away such knowledge to achieve undeath—a fate about which he's similarly cryptic.

Some adventurers say Mrelgaunt never speaks anywhere but in the uppermost room (though his voice can, if he desires, echo down from it, or into the air around the Turret), but his awareness of intruders' actions and movements—and his spells—can reach throughout the ruin and for some distance around it in all directions.

AULSTAER MRELGAUNT

Medium-size Undead (Incorporeal)
Male Human Ghost 19th-level Wizard
Hit Dice: 19d12 (78 hp)
Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: Fly 30 ft. (perfect)
AC: 23 (+3 Dex, *+6 bracers of armor, +2 ring of protection, +2 amulet of natural armor*)
Manifested AC: 22 (+3 Dex, +3 Cha, *+6 bracers of armor*)
Attacks: Incorporeal corrupting touch +9/+4 melee (+12/+7 melee vs. material opponents); or incorporeal dagger +12/+7 ranged
Damage: Incorporeal corrupting touch 1d4; incorporeal dagger 1d4
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Manifestation, corrupting touch, malevolence, spells
Special Qualities: Undead, incoporeal, +4 turn resistance, rejuvenation
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +17
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con–, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 17
Skills: Alchemy +15, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Listen +10, Scry +25, Search +7, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +24, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +5.
Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Mastery (*chain lightning, fireball, spell turning, wall of ice, whirlwind of bones*), Spell Penetration, Still Spell
Challenge Rating: 21
Alignment: Neutral good

Mrelgaunt was a 19th-level wizard when he passed into undeath. His full roster of spells isn't known but some of them appear below. Adventurers report that he can speak Chondathan, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, and Illuskan. His spirit's purpose seems to be to teach and advise living users of arcane spells, but Mystra might have another, as yet hidden, destiny for him. When confronted with enemies, he often utilizes the bones of intruders (kept in an old tree nearby) by means of the *whirlwind of bones* spell (see sidebar).

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

Spells (4/12/5/10/5/5/4/4/3/3) from the following list: 0 level: all; 1st level: *cause fear, shield, grease, mage armor, magic missile, message, summon monster I, charm person, silent image;* 2nd level: *arcane lock, identify, minor image, knock, levitate, summon monster II, summon swarm, web;* 3rd level: *dispel magic, fireball, magic circle, sleet storm, summon monster III, suggestion, lightning bolt, wind wall, major image, shrink item;* 4th level: *minor globe of invulnerability, evard's black tentacles, summon monster IV, arcane eye, scrying, ice storm, Otiluke's resilient sphere, wall of ice;* 5th level: *dominate person, magic jar, nightmare, lesser planar binding, summon monster V, contact other plane, cone of cold, telekinesis;* 6th level: *globe of invulnerability, greater dispelling, planar binding, legend lore, chain lightning, disintegrate, eyebite, move earth, true seeing;* 7th level: *finger of death, mass invisibility, plane shift, summon monster VII, spell turning, greater scrying, whirlwind of bones;* 8th level: *greater planar binding, maze, Otto's irresistible dance, polymorph any object, power word–blind, summon monster VIII;* 9th level: *energy drain, meteor swarm, gate, summon monster IX, wish.*

Possesions: *+6 bracers of armor, +2 ring of protection, +2 amulet of natural armor, +3 cloak of resistance, staff of frost, ring of wizardry I, ring of wizardry III,* seven spellbooks. All items listed here are incorporeal.

WHIRLWIND of BONES

Necromancy
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V,S,M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft + 40 ft./level)
Effect: 20 ft. radius area of flying bones
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

A deadly *whirlwind of bones* appears and flies at the caster's behest.

The *whirlwind of bones* can fly up to 80 feet per round with perfect maneuverability. It moves as you actively direct it (a move-equivalent action for you); otherwise it merely stays at rest and damages all creatures within the effect. The *whirlwind* has no actual wind, so it does not put out torches and the like.

When the *whirlwind* stops, creatures within the effect take 1d6 points of damage +1 point per caster level to a maximum of +10 (half damage on a successful Reflex save). Half the damage is bludgeoning damage, but half results directly from negative energy. Undead creatures suffer only bludgeoning damage from the spell. A moving *whirlwind of bones* causes no damage.

Material Component: A skeleton of a Medium-size or Large creature. The bones can't be part of a living or undead creature, or a construct, nor can they be constrained in any way.

THE THIRD FLOOR
TAPESTRIES ROT HERE, THEIR SCENES WORN AWAY, BUT THEY WERE MERE DECORATION, OF NO CONSEQUENCE, WHEN NEW. SPHERE OF GLOWING AIR ABOVE THE TABLE, AN IMMOBILE "LAMP THAT IS NOT," SEEMS PART OF THE TURRET ENCHANTMENTS. STRONGCHESTS SIT OPEN AND EMPTY, BUT MRELGAUNT KNOWS MAGIC THAT REACHES "OTHER-WHERE" TO WHISK THINGS PUT INTO THE CHESTS INTO EXTRADIMENSIONAL SPACES AND THEREFROM RETRIEVE THEM.
HERE HE LURKS.
TRAPDOOR, WITH NO TRAP-SPELLS THAT I'VE YET FOUND. YET I MISLIKE THE LOOK OF IT.
THREE SMALL, WATER-FILLED CHAMBERS BELOW. THEY'VE STONE-BLOCK WALLS AND ARE CHOKED, KNOW YE, WITH WATERLOGGED NATURAL REFUSE, MANY DROWNED BODIES, BONES . . . AND POSSIBLY TREASURE.

THE SECOND FLOOR

GLOWING TAPESTRIES HERE, OF FOREST HUNTING SCENES; HELMLESS HUMAN KNIGHTS IN PLATE ARMOR ON HORSEBACK IN FEARLESS PURSUIT OF SHE-PIXIES (TERRIBLY DANGEROUS, NO DOUBT). FAINT PRESERVATIVE SPELLS, BY ALL REPORTS, BUT A SENSE OF SOMETHING STRONGER, LINGERING . . . ORNATE CEILING LANTERN (PERHAPS MAGICAL) OVER A CENTRAL TABLE, AN ACTIVE HELMED HORROR BESIDE IT THAT AWAKENS ONLY TO ATTACK THOSE WHO VANDALIZE TURRET STRUCTURE OR FURNISHINGS.
SOMEONE HAS LEFT SOME SMITHS OR ARMORERS' TOOLS HERE. REMOVING ONE FROM THIS CHAMBER EITHER CREATES OR SUMMONS ANOTHER HELMED HORROR THAT HUNTS THE TOOL TO RETRIEVE IT.

THE FIRST FLOOR

A STOOL HERE, AND NOT MUCH ELSE, FOR UNLESS I'M GREATLY MISTAKEN, THIS IS A PORTAL CHAMBER–THE FOUR-POINTED STAR SYMBOL GRAVEN INTO THE FLOOR MATCHES SOME I'VE SEEN ON HIGH MOUNTAIN LEDGES AND IN REMOTE RUINS AROUND THE SWORD COAST NORTH. THERE'S STRONG BUT SLUMBERING MAGIC HERE, TOO; 'TWOULD SURPRISE ME NOT TO LEARN THAT THE PORTAL IS TRAPPED, OR PERHAPS IS ITSELF A CATCH-TRAP THAT SNATCHES PERSONS WHO USE CERTAIN MAGICS IN THIS ROOM AND TAKES THEM FORCIBLY TO ANOTHER PORTAL ELSEWHERE IN FAERÛN.

THE GAPING INNARDS OF THIS OLD AND RIVEN DEAD TREE ARE FILLED WITH TANGLED HUMAN BONES, BEST LEFT UNDISTURBED. IF ANGERED, MRELGAUNT CAN AWAKEN THEM INTO A DEADLY WHIRLWIND OF BONES MOBILE TO HIS WHIM. THIS HARMFUL CLOUD CAN MOVE AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE AWAY FROM THE TOWER, FASTER THAN MANY MEN CAN FLEE.

ELMINSTER'S NOTES

MRELGAUNT'S TURRET

Know ye that I'm certain of little of this lurking sentience and am forbidden by Mystra to pry into his nature and purposes, which suggests that he hath continuing importance. As a teacher of magic I cannot judge him, yet know that he speaks truth, so far as I can tell, and although possessed of some whimsy, hath never shown any shred of deceit or hurtful omission.

Here are some of his more cryptic utterance–things I desire to know more about, were I free to investigate. They hint that Mrelgaunt has held counsel with The Lady of Mysteries herself. Hearken ye:

"Four are the sorcerer-kings sleep near, mighty in their sorcery, each knowing nothing of the entombed others. I know why one waits slumbering; I fear the reasons the others had for submitting to age-long oblivion."

"If one knows the way, any spell can be twisted and so brought to bear fully on a foe. It must be learned by practice, for Mystra imparts this gift only to those who earn it for themselves."

"There is a ring that awakens portals by its very presence, and it is abroad again in the North, on the finger of one who knows not what it does."

"Three liches serve a darker, greater fell thing–a beast that hunts and devours Phaerimm."

"Beware floating helms, but heed the words they speak."

"When a being passes through certain sequences of portals swiftly and in the right order, Azuth visits powers on that being, such anointings lasting several years or more–and coming with what is even more precious: the lore governing their use."

"The lips in the shadows belong to Shar."

CITIES FOR THE AGES

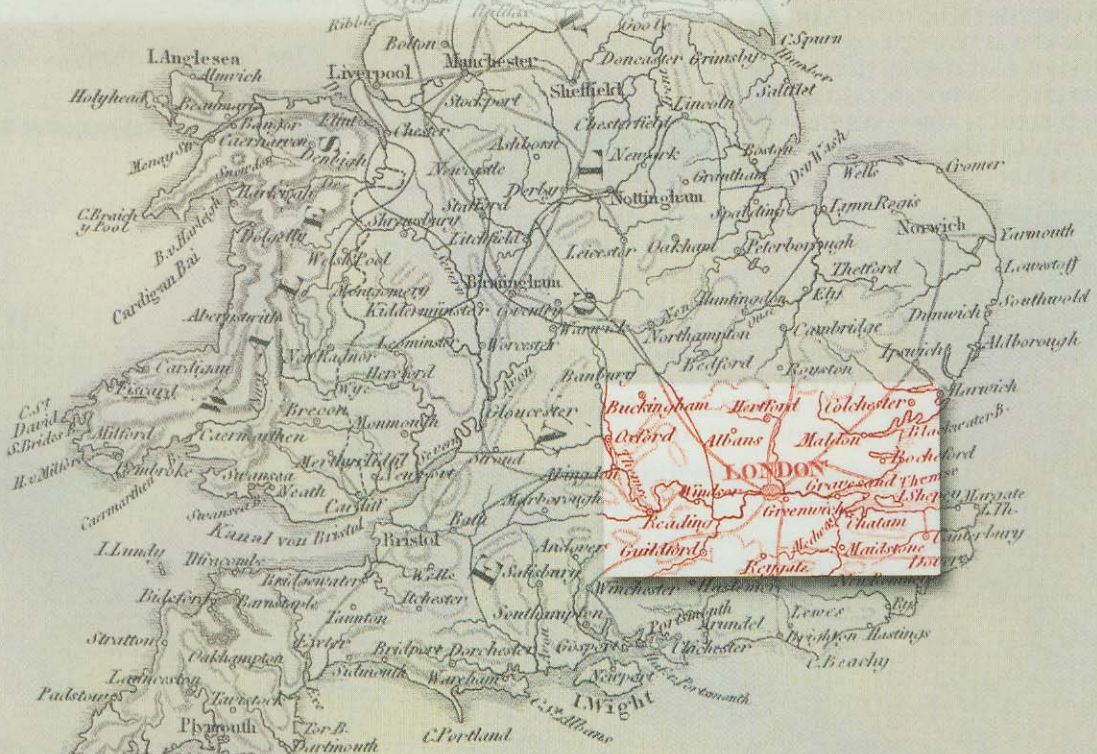
LONDON

When a man is tired of London he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.

—Samuel Johnson

It was built by giants and burned by druids; centuries later its bloody tower looms over streets haunted by wizardly plots against the Faerie Queene. Bards duel in the taverns and spy for aging lords, while worshippers of forbidden gods plot assassinations with ambitious nobles. It's not the sparkly setting of some lurid paperback fantasy bestseller, but the grim—and glorious—city of London in the 16th century. You don't have to worry about stealing all of its history for your game—London has been making more history than it can handle for two thousand years.

by Kenneth Hite · illustrated by Ted Beargeon



HISTORY

Lud, the eldest of these three, accepted the kingship after his father's death. He was famous for his town-planning activities. He rebuilt the walls of the town of Trinovantum, and girded it round with innumerable towers. He ordered the citizens to construct their homes and buildings there in such a style that no other city in the most far-flung of kingdoms could boast of palaces more fair . . . However many cities he might possess, he loved this one above all.

—Geoffrey of Monmouth,
History of the Kings of Britain

In Elizabeth's time, Londoners knew that the Trojan Prince Brutus, having slain the giants Gog and Magog, built Troynovaunt—New Troy—where the giant's tower had stood. Eventually, the Celtic King Lud rebuilt Troynovaunt as Kaerlud, or Kaerlundein. When Julius Caesar invaded Britain in 55 B.C., he built his own tower there to fortify what the Romans called Londinium. Although the rebellious Queen Boudicca burned the city down in 60 A.D., it bounced back to become a prosperous center of Roman rule. Even under the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, London's commanding position on the river Thames made it the gateway to Britain, and the main port for overseas trade.

By the time King Edward the Confessor sited his cathedral and his court at Westminster, upstream from London proper, the city was the de facto capital of England. William the Conqueror starved London out and built the Tower of London (on Julius Caesar's foundations, or so the story goes) to guard his new prize. London's powerful Lords Mayor extracted a strong charter from King Henry I, granting the city great freedom of trade and government, which further added to its prosperity. The rich guilds bought more and more privileges from succeeding kings, keeping themselves free of onerous confiscations and further priming the economic pump. London repaid the favor by supporting the monarchy during rebellions and peasant revolts alike.

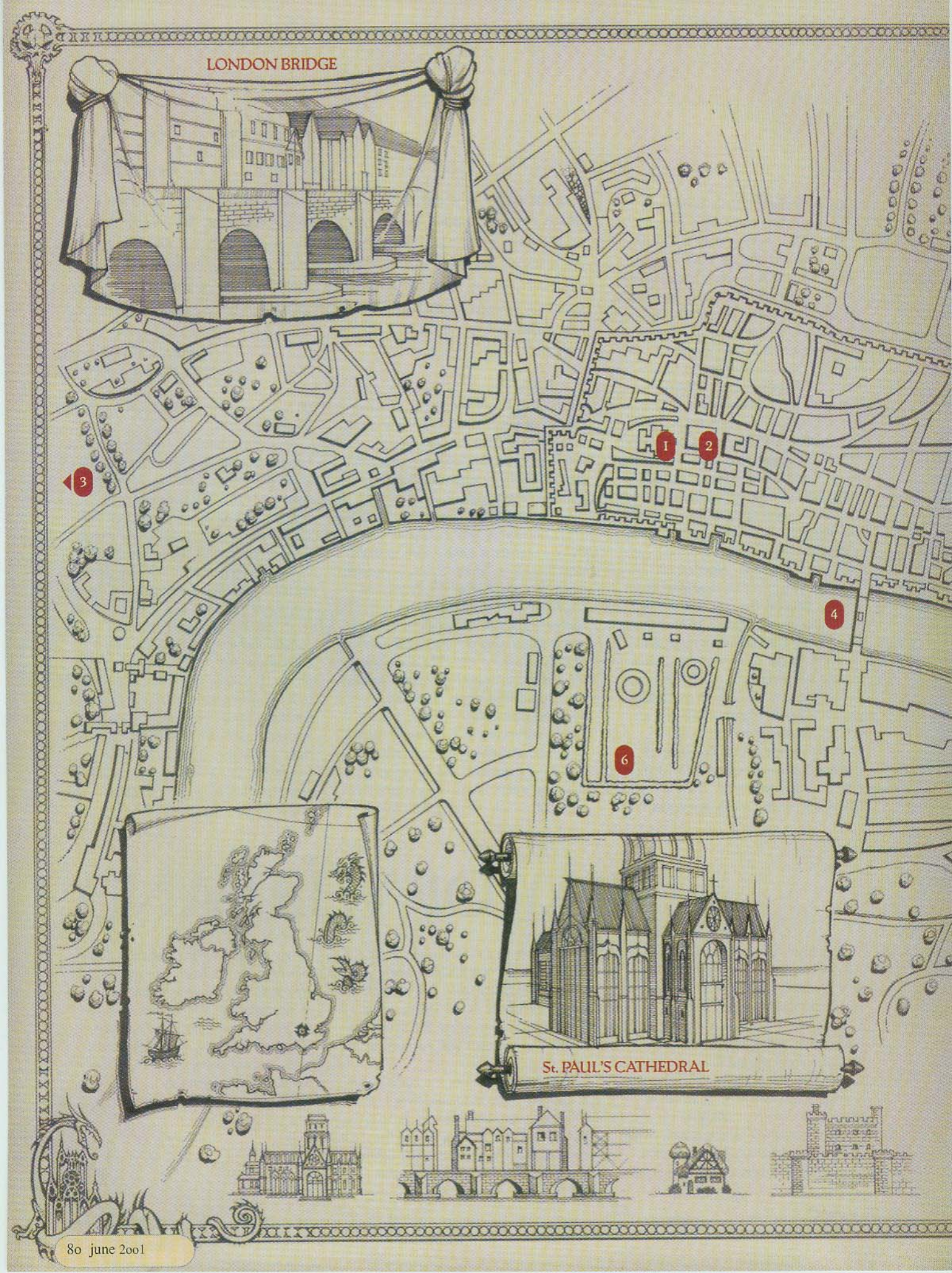
Elizabeth, "Good Queen Bess," enjoys great popularity with Londoners, especially as tensions mount with Catholic (and therefore hated) Spain. Londoners make up a quarter of the Protestant English army fighting Spain in the Netherlands, and demobilized soldiers add a dangerous criminal element to an already crowded city. The population in the last forty years has nearly doubled from 100,000 in 1550 to almost 200,000 now—which helped fuel the plague outbreaks of 1563, 1578, and 1582, and also the boom in construction. New mansions and tenements shoot up everywhere. Londoners burn sea-coal, which is convenient but dirty—London smog has been a problem since the 1300s.

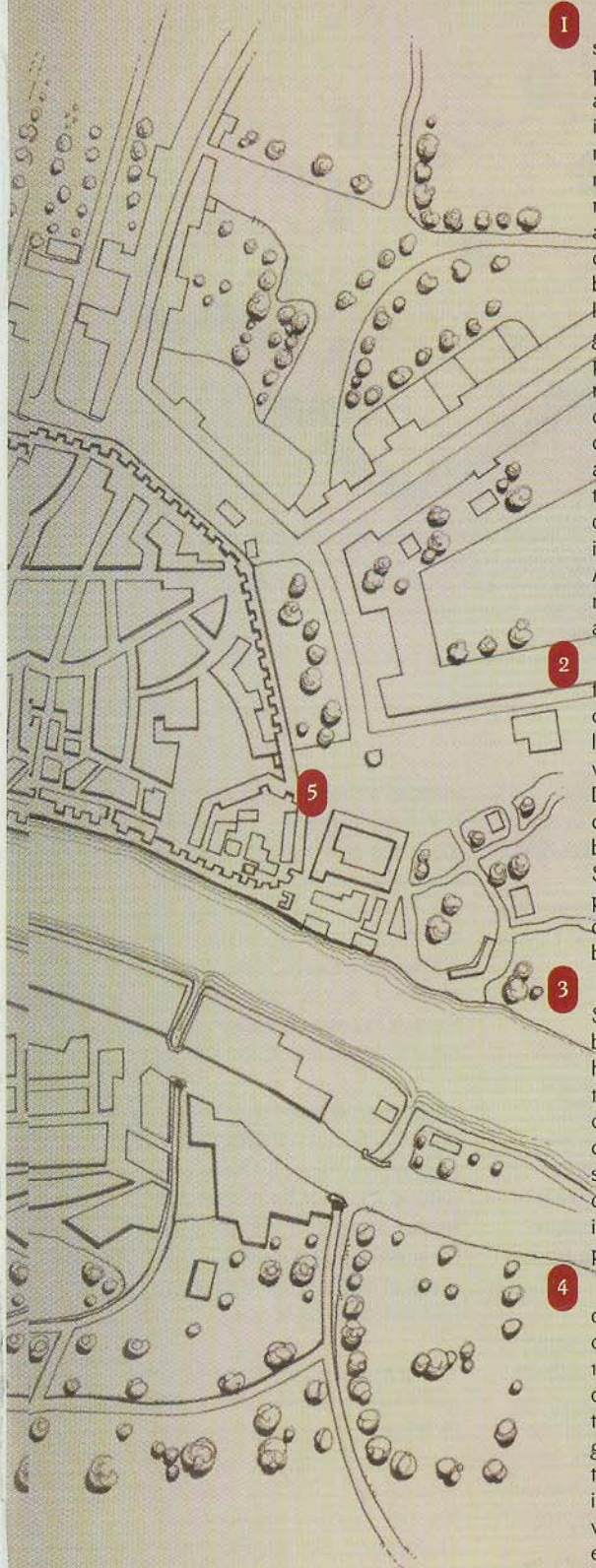
As the medieval economy expanded, London became a center not only of trade, but of clothmaking. After the Spanish sack of Antwerp in 1576, London took financial control of the cloth trade from Flanders, and around 30% of Londoners were directly involved in the textile industry. New technologies like silkweaving, glassmaking, sugar refining, and printing found their own niches in the "liberties" outside the gates, where the livery companies and the city law have no power. London's trade flourished thanks to large foreign communities, from the German-Danish Hanseatic fish and fur traders to Italian bankers. Occasional riots and anti-foreigner ill-feeling sweep the city even now, especially when bad harvests send prices up and wages down.

LAY OF THE LAND

The heart of London is the old, walled City, with the Tower of London on the east side at the river, and (from east to west) Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Moorgate, Cripplegate, and Aldersgate sealing the north wall. Newgate and Ludgate prisons, and their gates, hold the western walls. The commercial and metalworking street of Cheapside runs from Aldgate to Newgate, crossing Gracechurch Street at the great Leadenhall food market. Gracechurch Street runs south from Bishopsgate to the famous London Bridge. East of the Bridge, follow your nose to the Billingsgate fish market; the plentiful catches in the Thames help feed London even when the crops fail inland. The western wall runs along the Fleet River.

Fleet Street crosses the Fleet River at Ludgate (named for old King Lud) and runs west, past the old Templar stronghold, the Temple, where the lawyers and clerks study. The Strand continues the road west, past the stately rows of noble mansions along the river, to the royal palace at Whitehall, and the Parliament chambers at Westminster. Still farther up river, the grand royal palace at Hampton Court shines in the Tudor afternoon, a gilt oasis of order away from the chaos of the largest city north of the Alps.


LONDON BRIDGE
1
2
3
4
6
St. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL



KEY LOCATIONS

1 **St. Paul's Cathedral:** This grand Norman-style cathedral took over 150 years to complete, and its 489-foot Gothic spire wasn't added until 1314. The third-longest church in Europe, it needs that much space and more—the great aisle of the Cathedral is a microcosm of London, a center for trade, rumor, hiring, and crime. Across the twelve acres of St. Paul's Court sprawl tobacconists, insurance-agents, publishers and booksellers, laborers looking for jobs, lawyers seeking clients, and idlers seeking gossip. In these enormous crowds, a cutpurse can easily lose his pursuers—and many do. More rebellious, Puritan-minded clerics preach from St. Paul's Cross, an open air pulpit on the south wall; it was such a preacher who incited the mob that sacked the cathedral in 1549. Lightning strikes destroyed the steeple in 1561, and although it remains the center of London Anglicanism, the great church is in sad disrepair despite the best efforts of court architect Inigo Jones.

2 **Mermaid Tavern:** Just east of St. Paul's, this is the heart of the poetic and artistic community in London. Sir Walter Raleigh, Inigo Jones, John Donne, and the playwrights Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Drayton, and the new kid from Stratford can all be seen there drinking and trading barbs. Unlike the Swan or the Pelican in Southwark, it doesn't cater to actors, and its private rooms are for learned (or secretive) discussions rather than for prostituting the barmaids.

3 **Royal Exchange:** Crown financial officer Sir Thomas Gresham founded this immense building (surmounted by the Gresham heraldic grasshopper) in 1565 to supplant the Flanders cloth trade by providing a clearinghouse and bourse for London merchants. It has rapidly become an Elizabethan shopping mall, with stalls along its inner court selling feathers, hats, wigs, clothing, imported accessories, embroidered goods, perfumes, and ruff starches.

4 **London Bridge:** In 1176, Peter Colechurch designed a stone bridge of twenty arches to cross the Thames; when he completed it in 1209 it was 300 yards long with a wooden drawbridge in the center. Over the last three centuries, houses and shops have grown up on the Bridge, narrowing the central road from 20 yards to less than 10 feet in places. Overhanging attics, galleries, and walkways convert London Bridge into a covered tunnel; the palatial Nonesuch House (one of Queen Elizabeth's occasional residences) replaced the drawbridge in 1577. The pikes, where the heads of traitors hang, bristle from the south gatehouse. Two waterwheels turn beneath the bridge to pump water into the city's fountains, and construction on water-driven grain mills continues below two southern arches. By now, it is said that a stranger can get halfway across London Bridge before he realizes he's left the city.

5 **Tower of London:** Having been imprisoned in it for four years by "Bloody Mary," Queen Elizabeth has declined to use the Tower as a royal residence. Instead, it remains a prison, an armory, a home to the Royal Mint and Menagerie, an observatory, and so forth. Every monarch since William the Conqueror has added rooms or walls to the Tower, with the result that its interior is a maze. Many of the old royal apartments have become comfortable prison cells for aristocratic traitors; there is something of a bazaar in the main jail where prisoners can buy paper, pens, food, candles, and so forth. Although the Tower dungeons are noisome (especially the ones below the water line, which fill with rats thrice daily as the tide moves in), the Fleet prison is worse; here enemies of the state (or of the Privy Council) hang in chains to be washed by the Thames and forgotten.

6 **Southwark:** Across the river sits "the Borough," as the town of Southwark is commonly known. Since the time of Chaucer 200 years ago, Southwark has been a haven for prostitutes, beggars, thieves, peddlers, tinkers, and vagrants.

Many monasteries, which the Reformation turned into hospitals, grew up there at the edges of the city's sprawl—as did five prisons. Southwark's legitimate industries included leatherworking, dyeing, and brewing. Eventually the vagrants, river-pirates, and bravos withdrew to the low, marshy Isle of Dogs downriver. With the coming of London's great prosperity, and its new middle class, Southwark became the leisure capital of London. Boatmen prospered ferrying law clerks, young nobles, merchants, and students from the industrious north bank to the lurid south bank. With a population one-tenth that of London, it has nearly 200 taverns compared with 354 in the city. Theatrical impresario Philip Henslowe built the Rose Theater in the Southwark rose garden (already a popular spot for trysts and prostitution), where it would be conveniently near the bear pit and the bull ring. Other theaters, both permanent and impromptu, draw jugglers, fencers, puppet shows, street preachers, and clowns. Dice rattle and cards shuffle in the cellars under illegal "strong beer" taverns, as whores and footpads prepare to take the winnings one way or another.

How London doth pour out her citizens!
The mayor and all his brethren in best sort,
Like to the senators of the antique Rome,
With the plebeians swarming at their heels . . .

—William Shakespeare,
King Henry V, Act V, Scene viii

LOCAL HEROES

John Aylmer, Bishop of London (born 1521)
4th-level Cleric
A vindictive and petty churchman, Aylmer rigorously enforces the Act of Uniformity, which establishes the Anglican church and outlaws both Catholicism and Puritanism. His many enemies, even in his own faith, print seditious literature and satirical poems at his expense.

John Dee (born 1527)
1st-level Druid/6th-level Wizard/2nd-level Loremaster
The greatest mathematician and cosmographer in Europe, Dee has long supported voyages of exploration and scientific discovery. The greatest wizard in Europe, he has talked to angels and made gold for the Emperor in Prague. However, while Dee was overseas, he lost much of his influence at court; he stays up the river in his house at Mortlake and studies his ancient tomes of lore.

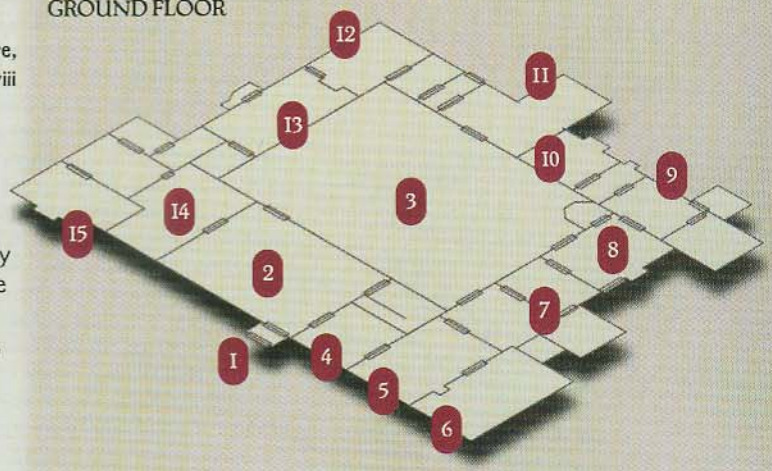
Robert Devereaux, 2nd Earl of Essex (born 1566)
3rd-level Aristocrat/2nd-level Fighter
The arrogant and not-terribly-competent favorite, Essex has ambitions of becoming Prince Consort—or even King. He fought well, if without brilliance, in the Netherlands. He and Raleigh are bitter rivals for the Queen's favor.

Elizabeth I, Queen of England (born 1533)
9th-level Aristocrat/2nd-level Cleric
Elizabeth, the "Virgin Queen," has ruled England well and tolerantly since the death of her ferociously Catholic sister "Bloody Mary" in 1558. As she ages, she depends more upon her clever diplomacy and brilliant captains to preserve English independence, and less on her marriageability to foreign rulers.

Simon Forman (born 1552)
2nd-level Sorcerer/2nd-level Rogue
Born in rural Wiltshire, within a day's walk of Stonehenge, Forman recently moved to Barbican, a liberty north of Cripplegate, after narrowly being acquitted of witchcraft and poisoning. He uses this notoriety to get clients as an astrologer or medical doctor; with the profits he visits plays and cheats on his wife with bawds.

A MANOR HOUSE of the PERIOD

GROUND FLOOR



English manor houses of the 16th century were quite elaborate. This house plan represents the main house of Ingatestone Hall, which was built around 1540 by William Petre. Also on the property were a gatehouse, bakehouse, brewery, milkhouse, stable, porter's lodge, mews, slaughterhouse, granary, washhouse, fishhouse, stillhouse, and servants' chambers.
These plans are based on floor plans in Tudor Secretary *by F.G. Emmison, Harvard, 1961.*

Whatever evil or malicious thing that can be found in any part of the world, you will find in that one city.

— The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes

ADVENTURE HOOKS

It should come as no surprise that the city of Marlowe and Shakespeare is a city full of stories, or that the home port of Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh makes a great staging ground for adventure. Here are a few scenario hooks to get you going.

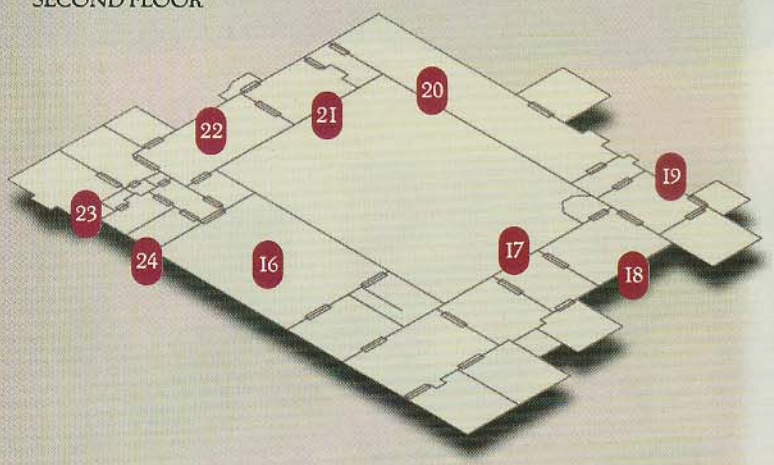
• To make enough gunpowder to resist a Spanish attack, saltpetermen have royal warrants to dig in any cellar or cess pit in the city—but something keeps killing the diggers in the tangled sewer-tunnels below the Billingsgate fish market. Thieves? Conspirators? Or is it something more monstrous?

• Dissident priests question the Bishop; furtive Catholics conspire with Spain; chanting Huguenots brawl with manic Puritans. In this welter of religious turmoil, a rumor spreads: somewhere in their old Temple, the Templars hid knowledge that the Pope would kill to suppress. A shadowy figure hires the PCs to find it—but are they working for the Protestant Queen or committing treason for her foes?

• Some powerful force centered on Ludgate disrupts magic nearby, changing its form and nature. Could it be the ancient Roman temple to Mithras buried beneath the gate? Or is it the magical body of the god-king Lud buried deeper still?

• Two statues, representing Gog and Magog, stand in the London Guildhall. Or, rather, they used to stand there until last night, when they came to life and stalked into the city to grind the bones of Englishmen. Can the PCs find, capture, petrify, and return two ravenous giants before word gets out? The guilds will pay well to avoid embarrassment and more diminution of their ancient privileges.

SECOND FLOOR



1 Porch	7 Pantries	13 Beer Cellar	19 Lady's Bed
2 Hall	8 Chamber	14 Dining Room	20 Gallery
3 Inner Court	9 Nursery	15 Parlor	21 Office
4 Buttery	10 Mistress Room	16 Dining Hall	22 Passage Room
5 Kitchen	11 Chapel	17 Wardrobe	23 Garden Room
6 Second Kitchen	12 Stool House	18 Master Bed	24 Armory

• In a power play against his rival Raleigh, the Earl of Essex has convinced the Privy Council to outlaw the marvelous new herb tobacco. Suddenly, fortunes can be made smuggling it into the city; criminal gangs spring up in the docks at Rotherhithe in Southwark and in Deptford further east. The PCs can rise to the top of the tobacco cartels and rake in the profits, or prowl the mean streets of Shoreditch to stop the smugglers one cargo at a time.

• Her poet Spenser called Elizabeth "the Faerie Queene." Now, Titania, Queen of the elves, shows up in the wilds of Hampstead with an armed elven escort to contest the title. The PCs can be ambassadors (especially if one of them also has faerie [elven] blood), spies (for either side—or both), or even the Queen's Champions in a contest to determine the true Faerie Queene for all time.

• One of Her Majesty's ships from the Muscovy Company has returned from the Black Sea without a crew. Now a mysterious disease is draining the blood of the finest ladies at court—while an unknown fiend mutilates streetwalkers in Southwark. The PCs must investigate and discover whether their foe is a single, powerful vampire—with multiple personalities—or the first wave of an undead invasion from the lands of the Turk.

• When the mob sacked St. Paul's crypts, they unknowingly scattered the ornamented bones of the vile sorcerer Robert d'Artois. Now his spirit seeks to rebuild his skeleton and rule London as a lich—which is why the PCs have to enter the illicit trade in holy relics, the London stolen property rings, and the secret sanctums of fanatical Puritan clerics to get them all back.

Now for God, Gloriana, and St. George—lay on!

Christopher Marlowe (born 1564)
3rd-level Rogue/5th-level Bard
Universally acclaimed as the greatest poet and playwright in London—and as an equally great sinner and reprobate. A great drinker, Marlowe openly scoffs at religion, chases boy actors, and smokes tobacco. His play *Doctor Faustus* is said to have the power to summon actual demons. However, years of street brawling have made him a dangerous swordsman, and his protector Lord Southampton has recruited him into Walsingham's secret service.

Sir Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland (born 1564)
5th-level Aristocrat/2nd-level Wizard
The "Wizard Earl" has one of the largest libraries in England and sponsors scientists and sorcerers alike. Court gossip whispers that Percy is a crypto-Catholic being groomed for the role of puppet king when the Spanish invade.

Laurence Pickering (born 1550?)
6th-level Rogue
The King of London Thieves keeps his house at Kent Street in Southwark, and oversees a network of whores, fences, cutpurses, and "coney-catchers," or confidence men. His men have the run of several liberties, including Alsatia, near Fleet Street, and Shoreditch. His brother-in-law is the Tyburn Hill hangman, which gives him connections in the courts.

Sir Walter Raleigh (born 1552)
1st-level Aristocrat/5th-level Ranger/1st-level Wizard
One of Elizabeth's prized "sea dogs," Sir Walter Raleigh has been a poet, pirate, explorer, swordsman, and courtier. As Warden of the Stannaries, he controls England's mines. Neglected for Essex, his busy mind now turns to science and magic with Percy.

Sir Francis Walsingham (born 1530)
4th-level Aristocrat/5th-level Expert (Spymaster)
The secretary of state, Walsingham has served Elizabeth well for decades. With his brilliant mind for detail (and using his own fortune) he has built up the greatest secret service in the world, and he does not shrink from using it to destroy the Queen's enemies. His failing health leaves the court wondering who will inherit his power—and his secret files.

Lord Peregrin Willoughby (born 1550?)
5th-level Paladin
Although not the Queen's Champion, Lord Peregrin is one of the finest swordsmen in the Queen's court. He is one of the few to use the Italian rapier, and he patronizes the Venetian fencing-master (and possible spy for Walsingham) Rocco Bonetti.

All characters are presented as of 1589. Don't hesitate to adjust their levels up or down to suit your own campaign; these are suggestions based on a relatively low-magic fantasy version of England.

STRANGERS IN BETHLEHEM

by Thomas Harlan & Katherine Lawrence
illustrated by Therese Nielsen

The Holy Land lies at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Here, on a dusty hill bounded by two deep valleys, stands Jerusalem, sacred to Christian, Moslem, and Jew alike. Long under Moslem protection, the Crusade stormed Jerusalem in 1099, leaving the city a Christian island in a sea of Moslem principalities. Even the Crusaders are divided—the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (ruled by Baldwin de Boulogne, a Frenchman) holds central Judea, while the County of Tripoli (the domain of Raymond of Saint-Gilles, Baldwin's bitter rival) controls the coast north, through Lebanon, to the borders of the Principality of Antioch (where Tancred de Hauteville, a Norman prince, rules). Each of these feudal lords plots against his fellows. There is no peace in this Holy Land, only endless strife.

Under the rule of the leper-king Baldwin, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem is desperate for men to protect the pilgrim routes and Christian shrines. The road from the port of Joppa up through the Judean hills to Jerusalem is fraught with danger. Bandits, rogues, and Arab raiders lurk in every ravine and cave, watching for Christian prey to enter their snare. Those men and women not murdered or enslaved march under a deadly sun. As many pilgrims die from the privations of their journey as from heathen attacks.

Even venturing a mile from the walls of the Holy City finds a barren land filled with enemies. The Arab princes in Ascalon, on the Mediterranean coast, are proud and hold the Temple Mount sacred. How can Mohammed's footprint lie under the boot of the Christian infidels? In every Moslem heart burns the desire to reclaim the holy places, and drive out the hated barbarian invaders.

In such troubled times, where pilgrims, churchmen, landless knights, spies, troubadours, and kings share bread and fear in equal measure, anything can happen. Men and women from the farthest reaches of the world are drawn to the dusty hills, hidden tombs and gloomy chapels of Bethlehem. Many come for faith, but more come in search of fame—the deeds done under this brassy sky are done under the eyes of Heaven.

Some of these adventurers hope to match the glory of Hugh de Payen, founder of the Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, a paladin fighting for his Church and God. But more will end in nameless graves scattered among the rocky, desolate hills.

In this year, Anno Domini 1114, men from the whole length and breadth of Christenden are here—Saxons, Normans, Germans, Italians, Scandians—all drawn by the mysteries of an ancient, holy land. Some of them—men thrown together by circumstance, men seeking peace in the birthplace of their savior—will find an awesome test waiting, as the fate of the world hangs in the balance of their skills and faith.

Note: A language listed as "pidgin" in the stat blocks means the character has incomplete mastery of it because he has only half a rank in Speak Language assigned to that language.

Golonza di Baratti, Grand Master of the Mysteries of Artemis

Appearance: Golonza is a large, weighty Italian man, given to flashy clothing and ridiculous hats. Of middle age, he gives the impression of great wisdom and cunning intellect. The discerning eye will also mark that while his goods and garb are of excellent quality, they have grown old and worn.

Background: Golonza is an alchemist, astrologer, and savant. He is also the most powerful sorcerer in all Christenden. A learned scholar, he has advised the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and the Doge of Venice. Sadly, his mystic powers gained him little save the suspicion and enmity of the Holy Mother Church. Rome does not countenance wizards within its domain.

Once the Church turned its eye upon him, Golonza was bitterly surprised to discover his royal "friends" forgetting his name, his face . . . even coin owed him for loyal service. Rejected, Golonza struggled with bitterness, penury, and the wine cup, but eventually roused himself from melancholy. "A man's time on earth is too short to waste on fools," he thought. Golonza's thoughts turned to the East. In his youth he dreamed of rivaling the ancients in power—a worthy goal, forgotten amid the splendid distractions of the Italian and German courts.

Determined to return to the "true path," Golonza traveled to Constantinople, seeking knowledge (and escaping the clutches of the Roman Church). In that ancient, decadent city he found tomes speaking of ancient inhuman races once dwelling in Judea and desolate Nabatea, races wielding tremendous sorceries and trafficking with the powers of the Outer Planes. What secrets might be hidden in the tombs and ruined cities of the desert? Of course, the Church can only applaud a man on pilgrimage to the Holy City!

Golonza is accompanied by his able assistant, Ruggero, a nimble Florentine minstrel. Oddly reticent for a bard, Ruggero hired on just as Golonza departed Venice (under something of a cloud . . .) and has served faithfully ever since. Of course, the lad is hard of hearing—sometimes Golonza must call his name two or three times before he responds.

Roleplaying Notes: Although equally at home in conversing with potentates and peasants, Golonza betrays great uneasiness in the presence of priests. Informed by harsh experience, the wizard trusts neither priests nor their servants. In youth generous and open-handed, Golonza now hides behind a suspicious mask—particularly in the presence of anyone that might have ties to the Church. Years of loneliness and flight—dodging from one city to another, fleeing the authorities—have left their mark on the wizard. Though he would never speak such a thing aloud, he yearns for a place in the world, for responsibility and respect. But can it be found in such a treacherous land?

Spells (4/4/4/3) from the following list: 0-level: *detect poison, light, detect magic, read magic, arcane mark, prestidigitation;* 1st-level: *change self, hold portal, color spray, message, jump, identify, mage armor;* 2nd-level: *flaming sphere, knock, mirror image, shatter;* 3rd-level: *hold person, clairvoyance/clairaudience, wind wall, dispel magic.*

Familiar: A large, dubious-looking raven named Hecate (12 hps; spd. 10 ft., 30 ft. fly—average; +5 melee—1d2-5, claws; Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +7. Language: Italian. See *Player's Handbook* page 51 for familiar special abilities.

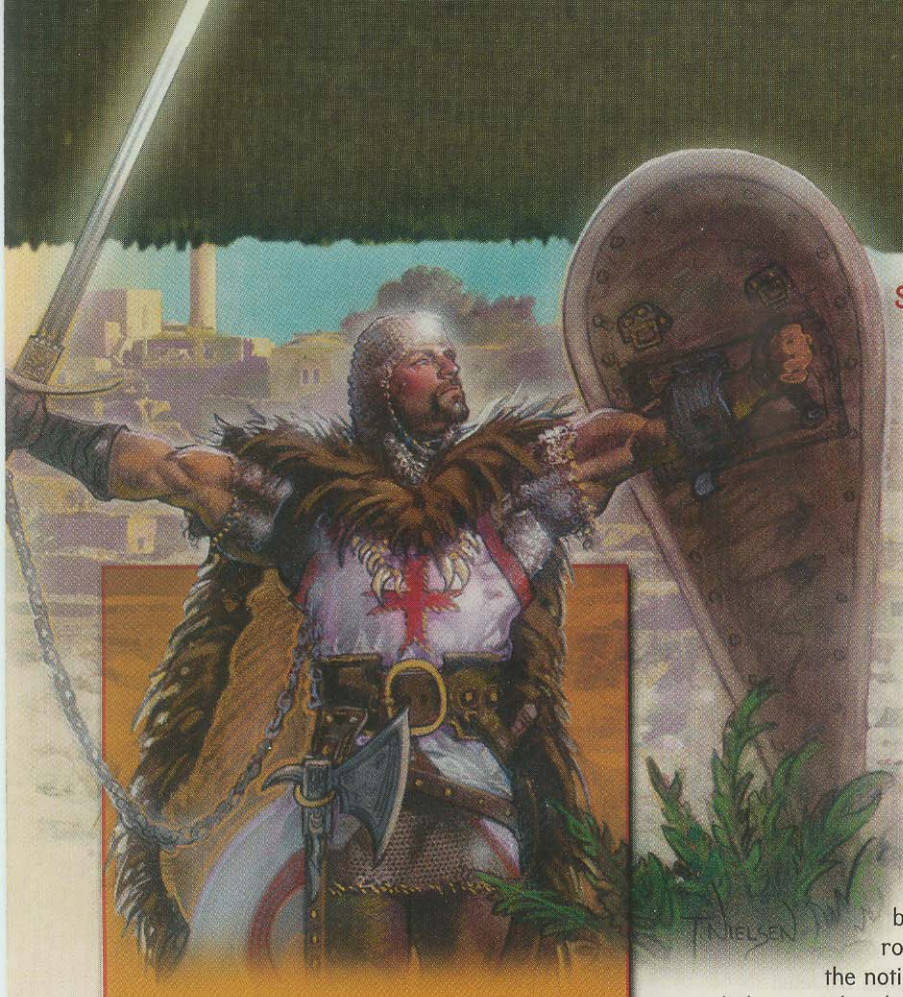
Golonza di Baratti

Male human, 6th-level Wizard

Strength	9 (-1)	Fort Save	+4	Armor Class	9
Dexterity	9 (-1)	Ref Save	+1	Flat-footed AC	9
Constitution	14 (+2)	Will Save	+8	Touch AC	9
Intelligence	16 (+3)	Alignment	LN		
Wisdom	13 (+1)	Speed	30		
Charisma	15 (+2)	Size	M (4 ft. 9 in.)		
Hit Points	24	Melee Attack	+2	Ranged Attack	+2

Skills: Alchemy +10, Concentration +11, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +3, Speak Language (Italian, Nabatean), Spellcraft +12, Spot +3.
Feats: Alertness (from familiar), Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge, Extend Spell, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.
Languages: French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Nabatean.
Possessions: Six vials of alchemist's fire, *staff of light* (casts *light* at 12th level, 32 charges), brightly colored robes, dirty cotton tunic and leggings, large floppy hat with a feather, spell books (three), bags of components (bat heads, newts, and so on), dagger, tall leather boots (worn), monocle, flagon of wine, belt pouch (3 gp, 20 sp), very stubborn mule ("Beezelbub").

Note: To be an average NPC of his level, Golonza should also have access to the following magic items: *+1 bracers of armor, +1 cloak of resistance, wand of magic missile* (1st level), *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of cat's grace.*



Sir Harold Edwinson

Male human, 4th-level Paladin

Strength	18 (+4)	Fort Save	+10	Armor Class	20
Dexterity	16 (+3)	Ref Save	+7	Flat-footed AC	18
Constitution	17 (+3)	Will Save	+5	Touch AC	12
Intelligence	11 (+0)	Alignment	LG		
Wisdom	13 (+1)	Speed	20		
Charisma	17 (+3)	Size	M (5 ft. 11 in.)		
Hit points	43	Melee Attack	+8	Ranged Attack	+7

Special: Proficient with all martial and simple weapons, all armor and shields, *detect evil*, divine grace, *lay on hands* (12 hp/day), divine health, aura of courage, smite evil (+3 attacks/+4 damage), *remove disease* (1/week), turn undead (6/day).

Skills: Handle Animal +6, Heal +4, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +4, Ride +8, Speak Language (Pidgin French, Pidgin Latin), Spot +4, Swim +1.

Feats: Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Endurance.

Languages: Pidgin French, Pidgin Latin, Saxon.

Possessions: "Wurmbiter" *+2 bastard sword* (*detects evil* within 60 feet by glowing), *+1 chainmail*, large steel shield (with Mercian heraldry), full helm over mail coif, bearskin cloak (with necklace of teeth), dagger, belt pouch with 15 sp, a curl of dark brown hair, well-worn handaxe, heavy lance, heavy mace, heavy war-horse, military saddle, camping gear (tent, saw, flint and steel, pots, rope, hatchet), lantern, three flasks of fish oil, six spare horseshoes, hammer and nails.

Spells Prepared (1): 1st-level: *cure light wounds.*

Note: To be an average NPC of his level, Sir Harold should only carry a *+1 bastard sword* instead of a *+2 bastard sword*, and wear masterwork chainmail instead of *+1 chainmail.*

Sir Harold Edwinson, Crusader Knight

Appearance: Harold is blonde, powerfully built, and has a fair (now sunburned) complexion. His eyes are gray and clear. Since he was knighted, he sports a small beard.

Background: Sir Harold is all of nineteen, and the third son of earl Edwin of Mercia. Under Norman law, his inheritance would be vanishingly small—some of his peers have been forced to take up a trade or craft to feed themselves. So, like many younger sons of Christian nobility, he has come to the East seeking fame, glory, and station. In this wild, untamed land, he can aspire to his own estate. As a Saxon in newly conquered Norman England, such a dream is impossible. Even here there are far too many Normans for his taste. But at least there is a chance for him to establish own domain.

Harold has been in the Holy Land for only a year, but his valor in combat against Saracen bandits plaguing the pilgrims on the Jerusalem road has already earned him a knight's spurs and the notice of King Baldwin. The Leper-King's favor and example have made a lasting impression on the young knight. If the King, held in the grip of a debilitating and horrific disease, can rule the fractious nobles of the Kingdom, maintaining the bulwark of Christenden against the Saracens, then young Harold can master his own impetuous nature—or so wise Manwys (his squire) would have him believe.

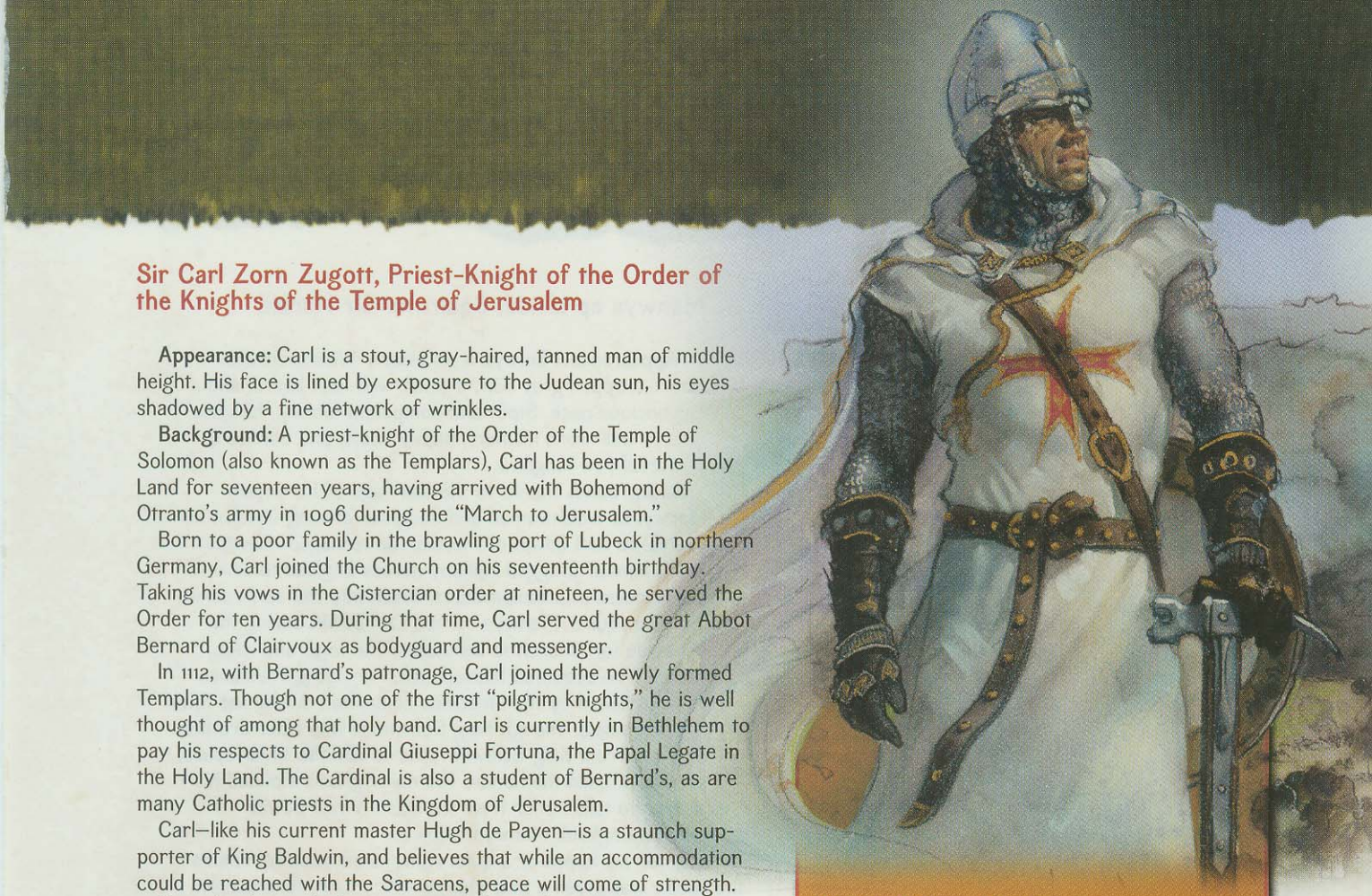
Like so many of his fellow Saxon expatriates, Harold has no patience with the Norman lords who strut and preen in the cities of the east. Only for King Baldwin (a rare Frenchman of integrity) might he make an exception to this firmly held attitude. The rest can expect the lance, the sword, a cart-axle, or even an honest Saxon fist.

Harold is also good with horses and fond of cooking—though only Manwys can really stomach the results. The young knight has come to Bethlehem for Easter, intending to cloister himself for six or seven weeks and seek peaceful accommodation with his wayward, reckless soul. His blade, Wurmbiter, and his exceptional mail armor are gifts from his grandfather, who found them in a barrow. In the presence of evil the sword glows with a faint yellow light. Grandfather Oald is sure the blade is a Dedannan weapon. Harold has never seen one of the Old Folk, but his ears are still stinging from the last of the ancient's lessons.

Roleplaying Notes: Harold is young, brash, and heedlessly brave. Only his own raw strength and his squire's cunning have saved him from one scrape after another (see "Pilgrim's Test" on page XX).

He takes his responsibilities as a Christian knight seriously. Twice a day he stops and prays for guidance from the Good Lord, and for a rein upon his hasty temper.

A man of good heart, Harold knows that his thirst for glory must be held in check lest he do harm to himself, or others, but restraint is so difficult! Shouldn't a man feel alive instead of buried by convention or custom? At least Manwys is there to keep an eye on the young knight.



Sir Carl Zorn Zugott, Priest-Knight of the Order of the Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem

Appearance: Carl is a stout, gray-haired, tanned man of middle height. His face is lined by exposure to the Judean sun, his eyes shadowed by a fine network of wrinkles.

Background: A priest-knight of the Order of the Temple of Solomon (also known as the Templars), Carl has been in the Holy Land for seventeen years, having arrived with Bohemond of Otranto's army in 1096 during the "March to Jerusalem."

Born to a poor family in the brawling port of Lubeck in northern Germany, Carl joined the Church on his seventeenth birthday. Taking his vows in the Cistercian order at nineteen, he served the Order for ten years. During that time, Carl served the great Abbot Bernard of Clairvoux as bodyguard and messenger.

In 1112, with Bernard's patronage, Carl joined the newly formed Templars. Though not one of the first "pilgrim knights," he is well thought of among that holy band. Carl is currently in Bethlehem to pay his respects to Cardinal Giuseppi Fortuna, the Papal Legate in the Holy Land. The Cardinal is also a student of Bernard's, as are many Catholic priests in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Carl—like his current master Hugh de Payen—is a staunch supporter of King Baldwin, and believes that while an accommodation could be reached with the Saracens, peace will come of strength.

He is familiar with the customs of the Arabic people and has often traveled among them incognito. His Ruthenian henchman Fingold, whom Carl rescued from slavery, is a constant companion. The dwarf hammer was a gift of the elders of Lubeck following his deeds in the siege of Jerusalem in 1099.

Roleplaying Notes: Carl, through hard experience, has learned that constancy, faith, and devotion are only found in God's hands. In men—even Christians as great hearted as Bernard, or Hugh de Payen, or even Baldwin the Leper—there is treachery, deceit, and betrayal. In and around Jerusalem, all tendencies—both to exalt god and to drag men down in foulness—are exacerbated.

The priest has seen Christians murder and infidels save. Among the Mohammedeans are men of valor and honor, while some Crusader knights are grasping and cruel. Carl has spent a long time among the desert peoples and has found faith in many hearts. Eastern merchants call this the "balance," which is weighed in every heart, and only God sees the tipping of the scales.

So Carl places his trust in his own eyes and hands, and gives his loyalty and friendship sparingly to those that have earned such gifts. He doesn't suffer fools lightly, for this is a hostile land, and survival lies in a narrow margin.

Some call Carl cold and calculating, even an assassin, like the zealots of the northern mountains. The weathered priest would say that he is alive, while the bleached bones of the less patient and cautious lie beside the road.

Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0-level: *cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, purify food and drink, read magic;* 1st-level: *bless, obscuring mist, protection from chaos*, remove fear, shield of faith;* 2nd-level: *endurance, hold person, shield other*, delay poison, spiritual weapon;* 3rd-level: *daylight, dispel magic, prayer, protection from elements**.

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Law (+1 caster level for Law spells), Protection (*protective ward* 1/day).

Sir Carl Zorn Zugott

Male human, 6th-level Cleric of the Roman Catholic Church

Strength	13 (+1)	Fort Save	+7	Armor Class	18
Dexterity	14 (+2)	Ref Save	+4	Flat-footed AC	16
Constitution	15 (+2)	Will Save	+8	Touch AC	12
Intelligence	15 (+2)	Alignment	LG		
Wisdom	16 (+3)	Speed	20		
Charisma	13 (+1)	Size	M (5 ft. 7 in.)		
Hit points	54	Melee Attack	+5	Ranged Attack	+6

Special: Turn undead (8/day), proficient with simple weapons, all types of armor, and shields.

Skills: Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +5, Heal +12, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +5, Profession (engineering) +7, Speak Language (Latin), Spot +5.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Extra Turning, Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer).

Languages: Arabic, French, German, Latin.

Possessions: *+2 warhammer,* five *potions of cure light wounds,* nasal guard helm, chain shirt, large wooden shield, heavy leather gauntlets, loose desert robes, heavy leather boots, light horse, saddle, bed roll, water flagon, wide leather belt with belt pouch and sling for hammer, 34 sp, 10 gp.

Note: To be an average NPC of his level, Sir Carl should have access only to a *+1 warhammer* instead of a *+2 warhammer,* and his chain shirt should be a *+1 chain shirt* instead of a standard chain shirt.

Manwys ap Lleidd

Male human, 5th-level Fighter

Strength	16 (+3)	Fort Save	+7	Armor Class	17
Dexterity	16 (+3)	Ref Save	+4	Flat-footed AC	14
Constitution	16 (+3)	Will Save	+2	Touch AC	13
Intelligence	12 (+1)	Alignment	LN		
Wisdom	13 (+1)	Speed	30		
Charisma	9 (-1)	Size	M (5 ft. 5 in.)		
Hit points	55	Melee Attack	+8	Ranged Attack	+8

Special: Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all armor, and shields.

Skills: Climb +10, Craft (bowmaking) +6, Handle Animal +2, Jump +9, Listen +3, Ride +10, Speak Language (Pidgin Arabic), Spot +3, Swim +6.

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longbow).

Languages: French, Pidgin Arabic, Welsh.

Possessions: *+1 studded leather, +1 longbow of speed,* masterwork buckler with Mercian blazon, short sword, half-helm with chain mail, two daggers, quiver of 40 arrows, fletching kit, hard leather boots, wide-brimmed hat with feather, three spare bowstrings and traveling case for longbow, water flagon, belt with belt pouch, cotton tunic and leggings, light horse named William, saddle.

Note: To be an average NPC of his level, Manwys's *+1 longbow of speed* should instead be just a *+1 longbow.*

Manwys ap Lleidd, Squire to Sir Harold

Appearance: Manwys is an elderly Welshman with short-cropped gray hair, a small, well-kept beard, and a pugnacious nose. Stout and competent looking, he goes clad in well-worn leathers, heavy boots, and carries a powerful yew longbow.

Background: Thanks to the marriage of his cousin Morwyl (a Welshwoman and daughter of King Cynfyn of Powys) to Earl Edwin of Mercia, the teenaged Manwys found himself dragged halfway across England to serve the Princess in a Saxon court. Taken into the earl's service as a squire, Manwys served Earl Edwin during the Crusade (or "March to Jerusalem") in 1098 and 1099. Though he acquitted himself well, the young Welshman was sickened by the atrocities committed during the Sack of Jerusalem. Though King Bohemond (the elder brother of the current King Baldwin) offered him the silver spurs, Manwys refused the honor. Too many ghosts clouded his memories to take honor from the dead. When Edwin returned to England, Manwys followed.

Sadly for his hopes of a quiet retirement, upon his return the squire was given a new charge—the young, surprisingly strong, and amazingly troublesome Harold. There would be no evenings of quiet talk around a fire, pint of mead in hand—not for poor Manwys.

In the intervening years, the Welshman has tried desperately to keep his young "ox" alive and healthy, despite every kind of disaster, scrape, battle, and misadventure. To his lasting credit, the brainless boy is still alive and now a knight himself—an honor won protecting the innocent and the faithful from brigands plaguing the long, twisting road from Joppa on the coast to dry, dead Jerusalem in the hills.

Returning here, following Harold, has not been easy for Manwys. Older eyes see the gaunt faces of the common people beside the road, and the bones of the dead peeking from under brush and thorn. The deep divisions between the Christian lords that now rule this "Latin kingdom" make him nervous. What kind of trouble will the boy get into next?

Roleplaying Notes: Manwys is devoted to Sir Harold, whom he has known since the latter was a wee babe. His personal burden, doubtless sent down by a vengeful God, is to see the youth through the travails and troubles of the world. Manwys has seen a great deal in his long years as a warrior and has an earthy sense of humor. He is not given to garrulity or panic, as he has seen some strange things. He is also good with quiet knife work but doesn't brag about his prowess with bow or blade.

Manwys likes a pint of bitters on an evening and is oft willing to tell a tale or two of the wide world. He often pretends to speak only Welsh, particularly in the company of those more refined than himself.

Jacopo Ghiarelli (A.K.A. Ruggero)
Florentine Minstrel

Appearance: Jacopo is a thin, sharp-faced man given to witty repartee and an easy hand with the ladies—and other men's money. He is skilled with the rapier (particularly with a blade given to him by Fingol of Tharheim), and he is bon vivant. He also plays the lute and mandolin, and he has a fine singing voice.

Background: Originally from the Italian city-state of Florence, Jacopo has traveled extensively throughout Europe and made the acquaintance of many bailiffs, maidens, judges, and counts. Like his current master, circumstances have forced Jacopo to find sanctuary in the East, among the heathens and sand-devils. Despite the tales of vast riches and golden cities prevalent in the West, he has found only broken stone, fallow fields, and gaunt-faced citizens. Where are the glories of the East?

Jacopo dresses and acts casually, but never goes about without a plethora of convenient tools hidden in tunic, jerkin, or belt. Too many swift exits made from presumably safe places have left him with an abiding, almost maniacal caution. He hates to climb, but is well prepared for such a hated eventuality. "Swift feet have never failed me yet," he often mutters.

His "magical" powers were gained during a short and eventful stay in the hidden northern elven kingdom of Tharheim, where Jacopo made the lamentable acquaintance of the elf-king and his sharp-toothed daughters. His escape from the hidden land still weighs upon him. Some scars remain, even after the flesh has healed, and some beauties should not be revealed to mortal eyes. He will be a happy man if he never sees one of the Hidden Folk again.

Currently, Jacopo is serving as the batman or valet to the Great Sorcerer diBaratti, under the nom de guerre "Ruggero." The rogue hopes that the sorcerer will draw all the attention, leaving Jacopo far from the eagle eye of the noble authorities.

Roleplaying Notes: The lithe Italian struggles to regain the reckless merriment of his youth. If there is song and cheer, he is in the middle of the crowd, raising a cup, firing his blood with games of chance and daring. Yet despite this, a shadow lies on his heart.

Pain and loss etch his features if he lets the mask slip. If he does not concentrate, memories overwhelm him and he becomes forgetful and inattentive. Even the simple guise of "Ruggero" the valet can be too taxing to him. The sight of a raven-haired beauty—if her features are too fine, her eyes just a little slanted—will transfix his attention.

Such distractions could lead a man used to living by his wits and speed into serious trouble . . .

Note: To be an average NPC of his level, Jacopo should carry a *+1 ring of protection* instead of the *+2 gloves of Dexterity.*

Jacopo Ghiarelli

Male human, 3rd-level Rogue, 2nd-level Bard

Strength	12 (+1)	Fort Save	+4	Armor Class	17
Dexterity	19 (+4)	Ref Save	+10	Flat-footed AC	17
Constitution	13 (+1)	Will Save	+3	Touch AC	14
Intelligence	14 (+2)	Alignment	N		
Wisdom	8 (-1)	Speed	30		
Charisma	16 (+3)	Size	M (5 ft. 9 in.)		
Hit points	26	Melee Attack	+4	Ranged Attack	+7

Special: sneak attack +2d6, evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), bardic music (2/day), proficient with simple weapons, longsword, morningstar, shortbow, shortsword, rapier, light armor, medium armor, and shields.

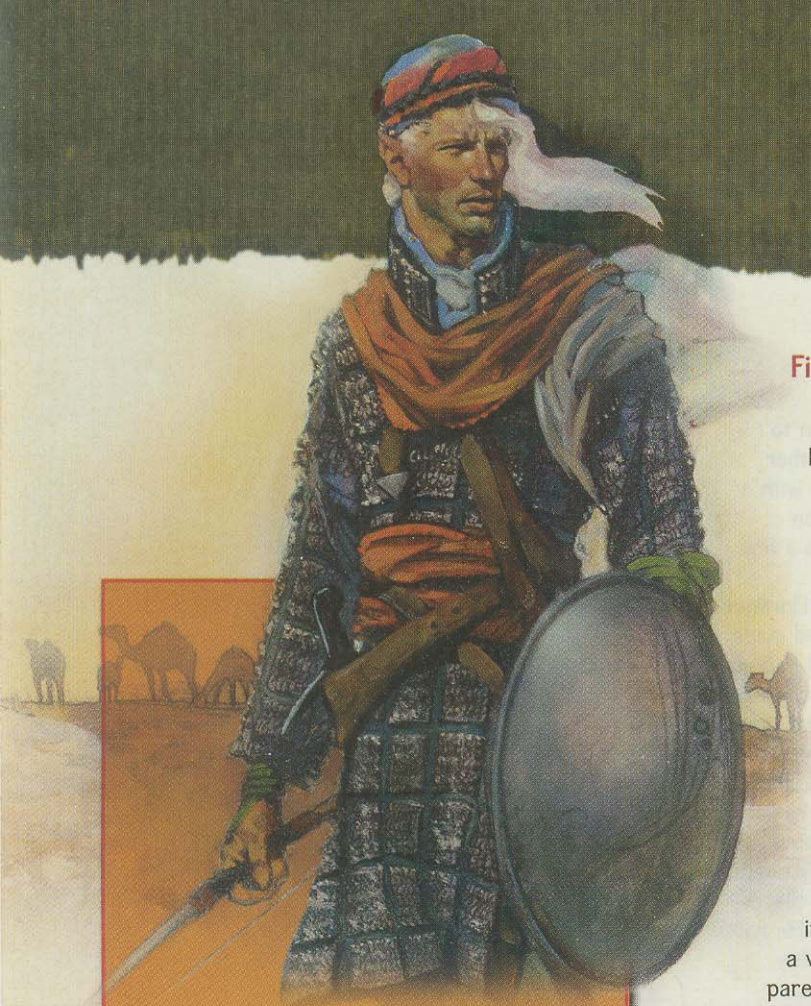
Skills: Balance +5, Diplomacy +5, Forgery +6, Gather Information +11, Hide +12, Jump +2, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Open Locks +12, Perform +11, Pick Pockets +11, Speak Language (Pidgin Arabic), Sense Motive +7, Spot +6, Tumble +11.

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Run.

Languages: French, German, Italian, Pidgin Arabic.

Possessions: *+1 rapier, +2 gloves of Dexterity,* masterwork studded leather, lute with leather case and sling, belt pouch (sand and a few dead bugs), seax (large dagger), three throwing knives, floppy beret hat with feather, tall supple leather boots, embroidered vest and tunic, pouch in vest containing 13 sp and one small amethyst (2gp), thieves' tools, battered woolen sling-bag, cooking kit, 40 feet of wire cored rope, collapsing grapple, wine flagon, light horse, deck of cards, set of gaming dice and stones.

Spells (3/1; arcane spell failure chance 15%) from the following list: 0-level: *detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, read magic;* 1st-level: *charm person, ventriloquism.*



Fingold Torfinson, Ruthenian Woods-runner

Appearance: Fingold is tall, thin, and deeply tanned. His ears show only the barest points, for his mother was a pagan Ruthenian, while his father was a warrior of the hidden Elven Kingdom of Tharheim.

Background: When Fingold was seven years old, his mother's village was raided by drow slavers. Those who were not taken as goods were brutally slain. Fingold and the other villagers were then sold to merchants from the Hansa League city of Bremen, in northern Germany, where he soon found himself on a slave block. A short, cruel existence in a salt mine or foundry seemed all too likely, yet such was not to be.

By chance, a cold-eyed priest named Carl Zugott purchased and freed him from servitude. The boy expected a harsher life than he had suffered in the village, yet the priest's scrupulous piety and fair dealings delivered him into a world free from fear. It was a world of harsh rules and frugal amenities, yet compared to the crushing poverty of a Ruthenian village, it seemed a life of luxury. In his eyes, he received a prince's meal, a king's bed, and a knight's rewards.

At first from gratitude, and then from friendship, Fingold accompanied the world-wise priest in his travels. Here in the Holy Land, the son of the dark northern forests has found a new life. Fingold has taken to the attire, customs, and weapons of the Saracens as to mother's milk. His once brilliant scarlet hair has been bleached to a pale rose. Cream-pale skin has darkened to gold. Fingold is devoted to the priest and the Church, though he has not taken the sacrament or waters of baptism.

Roleplaying Notes: Though his current enemies are the Saracens he admires, Fingold's abiding hatred is for the dark elves who slew his mother and sold him and his village into slavery. Luckily, this desert land is far from the northern forests and the strongholds of the drow.

There is a purity in the desert, bereft of the clutter of trees and undergrowth, that appeals to his elven heart. The beauty of the sky, of the weathered stone, even of the ancient ruins calls to him. There is a moment, when the sun is close to rising, when the dawn wind courses across the land, that brings his heart to life, singing with joy.

Someday Fingold will return to the north with a Christian army, and he will seek out the drow in their forest dens and hidden cities, and he will wreak great vengeance upon them and all their kind. He holds the thought of that day close in his heart as a great comfort.

Fingold Torfinson

Male Half-elf, 4th-level Ranger

Strength	17 (+3)	Fort Save	+7	Armor Class	19
Dexterity	17 (+3)	Ref Save	+6	Flat-footed AC	16
Constitution	17 (+3)	Will Save	+3	Touch AC	13
Intelligence	10 (+0)	Alignment	CG		
Wisdom	14 (+2)	Speed	20		
Charisma	9 (-1)	Size	M (6 ft.)		
Hit points	48	Melee Attack	+7	Ranged Attack	+7

Special: Proficient in all simple and martial weapons, light and medium armor, and shields; half-elf traits; favored enemy (drow +1); fight with two weapons.

Skills: Animal Empathy +0, Climb +3, Craft (bowmaking) +3, Handle Animals +2, Listen + 5, Move Silently +4, Ride +6, Search +4, Speak Language (Arabic), Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +8.

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Track.

Languages: Arabic, Elven, German.

Possessions: *+1 short bow, elven chain,* masterwork scimitar, light lance, seax (large dagger), small steel shield, steel helm with chain mail, quiver with 34 arrows, linen shirt and trousers, loose desert robes and cowl, two spare bowstrings, fletching kit, leather gauntlets, high soft-laced boots, light warhorse, military saddle, bedroll and other camping gear, cooking kit, two weeks hard rations, pavilion style tent.

Spells Prepared (1): 1st-level: *speak with animals*

Note: To be an average NPC of his level, Fingold should have *+1 chainmail* instead of his *elven chain.*

Your ultimate source for official D&D® adventures.

Dungeon®

96 pages of full-color adventures in every issue!

Adventures perfect for your campaign and suitable for all levels of play.

Bonus Side Treks and Maps of Mystery.

Exciting new look and fantastic original artwork.

Save 55% or more by subscribing now!

Fill out this form and mail it, with your payment, to the address below. **LIMITED TIME OFFER!**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Method of Payment:

○ Check ○ Money Order ○ MasterCard ○ VISA

Credit Card Number _____

MC Bank No. _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

U.S. and Canadian subscribers, mail this card with payment to:
DUNGEON Magazine
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 469106
Escondido, CA 92046-9106
or Fax to: 619-738-4805

European Subscription Orders
kay.palmer@tnsofrcs.com

Australian, African, Asian, and South American Subscription Orders
dungeon@pcspublink.com

Subscription Type:
○ New ○ Renewal (enclose mailing label)

To U.S. Addresses
○ 1 year (6 issues) for **$19.95 US**
○ 2 years (12 issues) for **$35.95 US**
○ 3 years (18 issues) for **$49.95 US**

To Canadian Addresses
○ 1 year (6 issues) for **$29.95 US**
○ 2 years (12 issues) for **$54.95 US**
○ 3 years (18 issues) for **$74.95 US**

Subscribers in the U.S. and Canada will receive their first issues within 8 to 10 weeks.

All prices are subject to change without notice.

DMDA00

Return of the Greater Drakes

BY JOHNATHAN M. RICHARDS · ILLUSTRATED BY RON SPENCER

Greater drakes are often put to use as aerial riding mounts by humanoid species. All greater drakes have draconic builds, with a reptilian head, four powerful legs, a long neck and tail, and a pair of bat-like wings. They hatch from eggs and molt several times over the course of their lives. Like true dragons, greater drakes have both low-light vision and darkvision, and are immune to both paralysis and magic *sleep* (greater drakes share all the traits of the dragon type as listed on page 5 of the *Monster Manual*). Unlike true dragons, greater drakes do not inspire magical fear, cannot cast spells, and do not amass vast hoards of treasure. They can't speak but if properly trained can be taught to obey commands in a spoken language.

One characteristic shared by all greater drake subspecies is the expandable throat bladder situated just under the jaws. The throat bladders inflate in the same manner as a frog's throat, and they are put to various uses by different types of greater drakes. Most greater drake subspecies have adopted a type of ranged weapon using their throat bladders. These breath weapons differ from most in that they are not supernatural.

There are many greater drake subspecies. Six of the more common types (the vandalraug, kavainus, arsalon, retchen-beast, silislithis, and fumarandi) are detailed in *Dragon* #260.

One reason for the greater drakes' late discovery is that the creatures, when spotted, are often mistaken for young dragons. While many humanoids make this mistake, true dragons have no difficulty distinguishing between greater drakes and members of their own race. In fact, many dragons consider greater drakes to be a delicacy.

Barauthas, or spitting drakes, have predominantly black scales. Rows of alternating red and yellow bands cover their backs, warning potential enemies of their venomous nature. The barautha's wings are black with reddish undersides. The creature has the standard draconic build of most greater drakes, although both its tail and neck are shorter and fatter than most. Perhaps its most distinctive feature are the two boarlike tusks that jut from its lower jaw. These tusks extend from the mouth even when it is closed.

Barauthas are carnivores, subsisting solely on the meat of their prey. Their tails store fat much like a camel's hump stores water, so barauthas can "stock up" on food when it is available and go without eating for weeks if need be, living off the excess fat stored in their tails. This ability helps them survive in desert environments, where food is not always plentiful.

Barauthas are generally solitary creatures. They form temporary bonds with a mate during the summer months, but these relationships last only until the female lays a clutch of 2-5 leathery eggs. The eggs are buried under a layer of sand or dirt, then abandoned by both parents, who go their separate ways. The hatchling barauthas must fend for themselves from birth. Their venom-producing abilities do not develop until the fifth year of growth, at which point the creatures have attained their full size. Barauthas live for about 20 years.

Barauthas are difficult to domesticate as adults; virtually all cases of using a barautha as a riding mount involve raising the drake from a hatchling. Barautha mounts are favored by both lizardfolk and yuan-ti, especially yuan-ti purebloods and those halfbreeds with human legs.

Combat

Barauthas usually attack first with their venom spray attack, then close in for close-quarters combat.

Venom spray (Ex): Ranged touch attack, Fortitude save (DC 19); initial damage blind for 1 minute, secondary damage permanent blindness.

Barauthas are one of the few greater drake subspecies with a venomous attack. Nestled inside a barautha's throat bladder are two large venom sacs; when the creature constricts its bladder the venom rushes through the creature's two hollow, upthrust tusks and sprays out to hit a target within 40 feet.

The barautha must make a successful ranged touch attack to hit the victim. If the attack succeeds, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 19) or be blinded for 1 minute. After the initial blindness caused by a failed saving throw, the victim must make another Fortitude save (DC 19) or be blinded permanently. Creatures immune to poison, or that lack eyes, are immune to the venom spray.

Once a barautha uses its venom spray, it cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds.

ERMALKANKARI

Large Dragon

Hit Dice: 13d12+39 (124 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), burrow 10 ft., Climb 10 ft.
AC: 19 (-1 size, +10 natural)
Attacks: 2 claws +16 melee, bite +14 melee, tail +14 melee
Damage: Claw 2d6+4, Bite 1d8+2, tail 1d8+6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spit stones
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +9
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 12
Skills: Climb +12, Hide +9*, Listen +16, Spot +16
Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Mountains and underground
Organization: Solitary or family (2-4)
Challenge Rating: 10
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually neutral
Advancement: 14-20 HD (Large), 21-26 HD (Huge)

BARAUTHA

Large Dragon

Hit Dice: 12d12+36 (114 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 10 ft.
AC: 17 (-1 size, +8 natural)
Attacks: Bite +15 melee, 2 claws +13 melee
Damage: Bite 2d6+4, claw 1d8+2
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Venom spray +11 ranged
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +9
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills: Listen +21, Spot +21, Move Silently +6
Feats: Alertness, Multiattack, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm land
Organization: Solitary or pair (2)
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually neutral
Advancement: 13-18 HD (Large), 19-24 HD (Huge)

The ermalkankari, or stone drake, is well-suited to the rocky cliffs and caves of the mountains that it calls home. The creature's scale coloration ranges from gray to dark brown, allowing the drake to blend in with the surrounding stone of its habitat. Its thick, powerful tail ends in a bony mass itself somewhat reminiscent of a small boulder. Deep-set black eyes allow the creature to see well in the deepest of mountain cave networks.

Ermalkankaris constantly expand their mountain-top lairs, not only to increase their living space but also to dislodge small rocks to store in its throat bladder. In addition they need to keep their front claws worn down as the claws grow at a phenomenal rate. The tail club is put to its greatest use during these excavations, breaking down large rocks into smaller stones suitable as ammunition.

Stone drakes are fiercely territorial, fighting among themselves to protect their domains. Only in the springtime is it common to find a pair of ermalkankaris together; these are invariably a mated pair, who remain together only until the end of summer, when the female lays her clutch of 1d4 eggs in the back of the male's lair. The male then flies off, leaving his cavern to the female. The eggs hatch in the late fall; the female raises the hatchlings until they reach adulthood.

Stone drakes are most often domesticated by mountain dwarves, since they share the same territory. However, the dwarves employ ermalkankaris more often as underground beasts of burden than flying mounts, as their interests lie more toward the stone tunnels deep in the earth than the blue skies overhead.

Combat

Ermalkankaris generally reserve their spit stones attack and tail club attacks for when they're on the ground. They prefer facing foes head-on and concentrate on using bite and claw attacks in combat.

Spit Stones (Ex): Like all greater drakes, the ermalkankari has an expandable throat bladder that it uses to make attacks. The drake swallows a variety of small stones and keeps them stored in its bladder like a pelican stores fish. When desired, it can spits these stones out in a spray. The ermalkankari spits a cone of gravel with a range of 40 feet. Victims within the area must make a Reflex save (DC 19) for half damage; otherwise, they take 3d6 points of damage. The ermalkankari's throat bladder holds enough stones for three such uses of its spit stones ability. An ermalkankari that runs out of stones during combat continues the battle fighting with teeth, claws, and tail-club; it does not stop to "reload" until after combat is done.

Skills*: An ermalkankari has a racial bonus of +4 to its Hide skill when in rocky areas, where it blends in with the environment.

MARDALLOND

Medium-Size Dragon

Hit Dice:	10d12+20 (85 hp)
Initiative:	+1 (Dex)
Speed:	40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor)
AC:	18 (+1 Dex, +7 natural)
Attacks:	Tail +12 melee, 2 claws +10 melee, bite +10 melee
Damage:	Tail 1d8+3, claws 1d6+1, bite 1d8+1
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft. 5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Spit brew +11 ranged
Saves:	Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +9
Abilities:	Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 11
Skills:	Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +9
Feats:	Flyby Attack, Hover (Monster Manual, page 62), Multiattack
Climate/Terrain:	Warm and temperate plains
Organization:	Solitary or pair (2)
Challenge Rating:	7
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	11-13 HD (Medium-size), 14-20 HD (Large)

Mardallonds, or mead drakes, are smaller than most greater drakes. This makes the creature a favored aerial mount for Small humanoids like halfings and gnomes.

A mardallond's scales range from a golden yellow to a light tan, allowing the drake to blend in among fields of grain. Unlike most greater drakes, who are generally carnivorous, mardallonds are omnivores, supplementing their meat diet with various grains of all types. This dietary oddity also contributes to the mardallond's unusual bladder use.

One of the mardallond's more noticeable characteristics is the sharp, scythelike bone extrusion growing from the tip of its tail. Mardallonds use their tail-scythes both as weapons and as tools: to kill prey and to cut grain.

Like most greater drakes, mardallonds are solitary except during the short mating season in early spring. After mating, the mardallonds fly off on their own, and the female lays 1d3 hard-shelled eggs shortly thereafter. The female usually buries and abandons the eggs in a field of grain, where the newborns will have a food supply when they hatch in early autumn.

Mardallonds do not make permanent lairs, preferring to assemble crude nests each night in tall grasses or fields of harvested land.

Combat

Mardallonds prefer to attack from the air. They usually attack small prey once and then enter ground combat, while larger prey might just receive a series of tail-scythe attacks as the mardallond makes hit-and-run flyby passes to weaken its foe.

Spit Brew (Ex): While mardallonds eat various types of grain as a dietary supplement, some grain is stored in their throat bladders, where it ferments over time into an intoxicating liquid. This is not really mead, but it has the general color of mead. This fact, plus the color of the mardallond's scales, led to its nickname.

By contracting its throat bladder, the mardallond spits a stream of this liquid at a single target up to 30 feet away. The mardallond must make a ranged touch attack to hit the victim. A victim drenched in a mardallond's brew takes no damage from the liquid, but the liquid is flammable and many mardallond riders take advantage of this fact, tossing flaming brands and the like at drenched victims. Setting fire to a victim drenched in mardallond brew has the same effects as hitting someone with alchemist's fire (see *Player's Handbook*, page 113) except that there is no splash damage.

Mardallonds store enough brew in their throat bladders for 1d4 such uses, but it takes a month of fermentation in the bladder for the liquid to become flammable. Thus, after four uses of its spit brew ability, a mardallond must wait a month before such an attack is available again.

This ability is useful to the mardallond in the wild as larger predators often shy away from the potent reek of the brew. Mardallonds also use the brew to mark their territories. Needless to say, mardallonds seem immune to the effects of ingested alcohol.

Many halflings and gnomes that have domesticated mardallonds for their own use dislike using their mounts' spit brew ability against enemies; they prefer saving the liquid for their own consumption.

The trilligarg, or chameleon drake, is one of the smallest and fastest of all the greater drakes. Its scales are tiny and close-set, giving the beast a sleek, supple appearance that decreases wind resistance as it flies. The rest of the trilligarg's form mirrors this trait: Unlike the majority of greater drakes, it has no horns, dorsal spines, or other protuberances that might reduce its ability to glide through the air.

Instead of claws, the trilligarg's toes end in sticky, suction cup disks like those of a gecko or subterranean lizard. These allow the trilligarg to climb up and down sheer surfaces. Also like a gecko, the trilligarg excels at remaining completely motionless for great lengths of time, only to burst forward in a sudden spurt of speed.

Trilligargs come together in the spring to mate and depart immediately afterward. Several weeks later the female lays a small clutch of 1-4 eggs that are immediately swallowed and stored in her throat bladder for transport. In a manner similar to marsupial animals, trilligarg females carry their young with them until the young are large enough to survive on their own.

Trilligargs do not keep permanent lairs, preferring to rely upon their camouflage abilities to keep them safe while they rest. They usually spend the night clinging to the side of a cliff, in the limbs of a sturdy tree, or motionless at the top of a large hill.

Because of their size, trilligargs are a favorite mount of smaller humanoids like gnomes, halflings, and goblins. Trilligarg riders strap themselves onto their mounts with elaborate saddle harnesses, allowing them to remain seated even while the drake perches motionless on the side of a cliff.

TRILLIGARG

Medium-Size Dragon

Hit Dice:	9d12+9 (67 hp)
Initiative:	+2 (+2 Dex)
Speed:	60 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (average)
AC:	17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +11 melee
Damage:	Bite 1d8+3
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Throat spikes
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills:	Climb +10, Hide +21*, Listen +10, Spot +10
Feats:	Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack
Climate/Terrain:	Warm and temperate forest
Organization:	Solitary or family (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	10-13 HD (Medium-size), 14-18 HD (Large)

Combat

If its initial attack doesn't immediately kill its intended victim, oftentimes the trilligarg abandons combat by dashing out of sight and remaining perfectly motionless, using its camouflage abilities to blend into the background and biding its time for the next hit-and-run strike. As trilligargs eat mostly small mammals, birds, and insects, these hit-and-run tactics are usually reserved for use against larger foes.

Throat Spikes (Ex): Like all greater drakes, the trilligarg has an inflatable throat bladder; unlike most, trilligargs use their bladders defensively. The over-large throat pouch is covered with thousands of needle-sharp spines that normally lie flat against the skin. However the spikes project outward when the pouch is fully inflated. Those attacking a trilligarg with natural or light weapons must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid taking 1d6 points of damage from the creature's numerous spines.

Skills*: While its natural scale coloration ranges from green to brown, the trilligarg has a chameleon-like ability to alter its scale colors to blend in with its surroundings. This grants the trilligarg a +10 racial bonus to Hide skill checks. This bonus is included in the trilligarg's Hide skill modifier.

VALLOCHAR

Large Dragon

Hit Dice:	11d12+33 (104 hp)
Initiative:	+2 (+2 Dex)
Speed:	40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor)
AC:	17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +13 melee, bite +11 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d8+3, bite 2d6+1
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Sticky spray +13 ranged
Special Qualities:	Slippery
Saves:	Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills:	Escape Artist +22*, Listen +17, Spot +17
Feats:	Alertness, Multiattack, Power Attack
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate and warm land
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	9
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	13-19 HD (Large), 20-33 HD (Huge)

The vallochar, or web drake, is a dark-scaled creature often mistaken for a young black dragon. The creature's scales are most often pitch black, but occasionally a deep gray or a dark, midnight blue. A white mottling along the sides of the creature's flanks and wings is common but not universal. Regardless of scale coloration, vallochar hides are always sleek and shiny, the result of a lubricating oil secreted by the beast.

A vallochar's throat bladder is unique among greater drake subspecies in that it is split: In effect, the creature has two separate throat pouches, one on either side of its neck. This split bladder plays an important part in the vallochar's sticky spray ability.

Vallochars are generally solitary creatures. They come together to mate in the spring, after which the female lays 1-6 eggs. These eggs are then taken, one at a time, to a generally inaccessible place like the top of a tree or the side of a cliff, and stuck in place with the female's sticky spray. She then abandons the eggs; newly-hatched vallochars must learn to fly and fend for themselves immediately after birth.

Combat

Vallochars usually depend upon their sticky spray to immobilize their prey at the beginning of combat, then move in with a teeth-and-claws routine. They enjoy immobilizing flying prey with their sticky spittle in mid-air so that the unfortunate creature plummets to the ground.

Sticky Spray (Ex): A vallochar's bladder attack is a mass of sticky, liquid goo that it can spit at targets up to 40 feet away. The vallochar must make a ranged touch attack to hit a victim. Victims hit by the attack suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and a -4 circumstance penalty to effective Dexterity. An entangled victim must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or be stuck in place and unable to move. Creatures that make the save move at half speed. A character capable of spellcasting who is entangled in the goo must make a Concentration check (DC 15) to cast a spell. Entangled creatures remain so until 15 points of slashing damage is dealt to the goo or until a Strength Check (DC 27) is made. A creature attempting to cut the goo automatically hits.

A character stuck in place can break free with a successful Strength check (DC 27) or by dealing 15 points of damage to the sticky spit with a slashing weapon. Creatures freed from being stuck in place are no longer considered entangled by the goo and suffer no penalties.

Once a vallochar uses its sticky spit, it cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds.

Slippery: Vallochars exude a slippery oil from their skin that coats their scales and makes them difficult to grasp. (Vallochar saddles are therefore elaborate affairs, anchored by straps around the creature's four legs as well as its belly.) Webs, magical or otherwise, don't affect vallochars.

Skills*: Thier inherent slickness gives the vallochar a +15 racial bonus to Escape Artist checks. This bonus is included in the vallochar's skills entry. It also makes vallochars immune to the effects of their own sticky spray.

MISCELLANEOUS MISHAPS TAVERN ACTIVIES

BY DAWN IBACH

Even if you've avoided the stereotypical meeting of heroes in the local tavern, chances are that your group will visit a public house from time to time. To keep those trips from becoming bland, here are a few ideas to add a little depth to the other patrons of an inn or tavern. Use them to describe a group of patrons or just a single person.

When your PCs enter a tavern, pick an event you think will pique their interest, or roll 1d100 for a random result. Most of these activities indicate nothing more than the mood or personality of the other patrons, but some might suggest interesting subplots. D

1d100	Activity
1	Grooming, brushing, and braiding hair or a beard
2	Playing chess
3	Playing a drinking game
4	Flirting with a neighboring patron
5	Flirting with a serving wench
6	Flirting with a PC
7	Making basic armor repairs
8	Mending clothes
9	Drinking from a fancy mug
10	Smoking or sharing an ornate pipe
11	Talking in sign language
12	Speaking in "cant" (Innuendo skill use)
13	Speaking a foreign tongue
14	Eating a banquet feast
15	Eating trail rations
16	Stroking a cat or dog under the table
17	Feeding a pet bird
18	Carving something into the table
19	Twirling fingers over a table candle or in a lantern
20	Burning straw strands over a table flame
21	Mixing herbal ingredients into a mug
22	Juggling
23	Doing knife tricks
24	Sleeping
25	Dancing, with or without music
26	Playing music, well or badly
27	Nervously tapping fingers
28	Feeding a fire with pages from a book
29	Talking to self
30	Drowning sorrows, telling a neighbor her life's story
31	Having a drinking contest
32	Cutting food into very small pieces
33	Carving a stick of wood from a fireplace rack
34	Making rude noises and pretending not to
35	Desperately looking for someone
36	Cleaning weapons
37	Eating with no manners
38	Shouting or grumbling about slow service
39	Angrily watching patrons
40	Talking quietly
41	Arguing quietly
42	Talking to invisible friend
43	Trying to recruit adventurers
44	Singing or just playing an instrument
45	Getting ready to leave
46	Poking fun at a local
47	Watching the barkeep
48	Watching someone at the next table
49	Just settling in
50	Watching the fire, mesmerized
51	Looking around at members of the same or opposite sex
52	Looking at the PCs
53	Examining a piece of parchment
54	Looking at a small object
55	Looking at object that they try to keep hidden
56	Poring over a picture or bounty
57	Eyeing a victim surreptitiously
58	Making notes
59	Trying to sell something
60	Playing darts
61	Playing dice
62	Playing cards
63	Arm wrestling
64	Questioning a patron, roughly or politely
65	Watching the door
66	Watching the barmaid
67	Talking to the innkeeper, but looks at the PCs often
68	Sketching with charcoal
69	Arguing with the barmaid about prices
70	Arguing with the barkeep about the food's quality
71	Sipping fine brandy
72	Enjoying a dessert (or several of them)
73	Writing a letter or poem
74	Composing a song with an instrument
75	Arguing politics or religion
76	Celebrating a victory
77	Sharing one meal
78	Picking at food
79	Picking a fight
80	Liberally salting or spicing food
81	Polishing boots
82	Nursing drinks
83	Being ignored by the barmaid
84	Gossiping about locals
85	Gossiping about adventurers
86	Having boots polished by a boy
87	Reading a book
88	Writing in a journal while eating
89	Sitting very close to the fire
90	Looks sleeping, but is dead
91	Watching exits
92	Piercing friend's ear
93	Giving friend a tattoo
94	Buying traveling supplies
95	Slipping a powder into neighbor's mug
96	Eavesdropping on neighboring table
97	Sharpening weapons—many of them
98	Tying neighbor's bootlaces under the table
99	Using a spell to create food
100	Using a spell to create pictures on the wall

HOARD of the HOWLING WYRM

by Robert Harris · illustrated by Dennis Cramer

A day's ride from the village of Hurj lies Tarret's Cliffs, a tumbled pile of stones that rises thousands of feet above the surrounding lands. Since the time of the first elves, these cliffs have harbored fell creatures. Most recently, the legend of the red dragon Nightcandle and the treasures lost within the maimed dragon's lair have inspired many—mostly the foolish—to venture up the face of Tarret's Cliffs.

The one adventurer who claims to have escaped the dragon is the traveling minstrel Wernden, who immortalized both the Howling Wyrm and a group of would-be slayers armed with magic in his ballad "Nightcandle's Lament." Many have claimed that they have ventured into the lair of the Howling Wyrm and looted it, but none of the legendary items carried by Wernden's dragon-hunters have since reappeared.

The band of slayers was was led by Nightcandle's own daughter, the half-dragon ogre mage Letrathe, who masqueraded as an elf maiden. Letrathe wore a magic suit of armor so strong that it put her within reach of all she desired. Gryr, who sought to add dragon-hunter to his list of dark accomplishments, carried the shield variously known as *Frosthaven* or *Flameshroud*. The half-orc berserker Kra'l knew no fear nor possessed the wisdom to appreciate it; he carried the deadly axe *Scalebreaker*. Adoc the Voiceless had all the answers at hand, if only he had kept them in mind. Lastly, the bard Durnen wanted only one thing from Nightcandle, but the dragon took the bard's life and the *Beguiler of Wyrms* in exchange.

The arms carried by this band were equal to the task, yet Nightcandle's slayers lie shattered and scorched within the lair atop Tarret's Cliffs. Why did they fail? Wernden claims that the first line of Adoc's book held the answer: "Those who seek to slay a dragon must have unity of purpose, for divided attentions are tantamount to ruin." Ultimately, Nightcandle fared little better than his daughter and her associates, but he still lives and has gained many wiles to replace his lost sight and crippled limb. The villagers of Hurj hear him bemoaning his fate every night. They know, however, that the wyrm is not merely complaining of his wounds—the Howling Wyrm still calls to those foolish enough to steal from his hoard.

Letrathe's Skin

In his younger days, when he spent less time protecting his hoard, Nightcandle ventured both near and far in various guises. Notably, he spent much time with the ogre mage witch Delathe. The product of their liaison was a daughter, whom the world came to know as Letrathe. Nightcandle eventually grew tired of Delathe and slew her in Letrathe's fifteenth year. He then seized the ogre mage's wealth to add to his own. Finding his daughter to be an amusement, he brought her back to his lair and spent the next few seasons tutoring her in the arcane arts.

Letrathe learned her lessons well and left before her father tired of her as he did her mother. She made her way easily in the world by using her natural inclination toward magic, shapeshifting, and brutality. Her time spent with Nightcandle awakened more than her magical abilities; it kindled both a burning lust for wealth and an intense hatred of herself and her father. More than anything, Letrathe wanted to be a dragon, not just a half-breed, and it was through a suit of magic armor that she thought she could achieve her goal. This drove her to gather a select group of mercenaries to assist her.

Letrathe adopted the persona of an elven adventurer and wandered for several years before she fell in with Adoc the Voiceless, a thief and extortionist of some repute. She preferred the quiet man to the ranger Gryr, who delighted in slaying humanoids of all types, particularly ogres. The half-dragon and her hirelings slaughtered a trio of young red dragons who still laired together for mutual protection. From their hides, she created a suit of dragon scale armor that encased her from head to toe. She incorporated a single flat diamond into the scales of the breastplate and used magic to craft armor to suit her. Gryr dubbed the armor "Letrathe's skin."

Letrathe wore the armor in the attack. She entered Nightcandle's lair in gaseous form and struck while the dragon was befuddled with the bard's music. Resuming her true form, she confronted her father. The armor allowed her to withstand Nightcandle's fiery breath, and she used the diamond's power to make good her dream of being a dragon while her father was distracted by his other attackers. Unfortunately, Nightcandle's will was stronger than Letrathe's, and he forced her spirit back into the diamond. He destroyed her body before she could return to it, so she perished within her own creation.

Letrathe's skin is a suit of *+1 full plate* crafted of red dragon scales. It magically grows or shrinks to fit any Large, Medium-size, or Small

wearer. It is particularly unusual because of the huge diamond (worth approximately 5,000 gp) set in the breastplate. Letrathe cut the diamond to resemble a dragon's scale, and the gem acts as the repository for the armor's primary ability.

Once per week, on command, the wearer of *Letrathe's skin* can attempt to *magic jar* as a 10th-level sorcerer using the diamond as the receptacle for her soul. In addition, the armor can absorb up to 120 points of fire damage, after which the wearer suffers normally from fire-based attacks. Recharging this power requires the wearer to immerse the armor from twilight to dawn in the blood of a freshly slain red dragon.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *magic jar, protection from elements;* **Market Price:** 56,650 gp; **Cost to Create:** 31,650 gp + 2,000 XP; **Weight:** 50 lb.

Scalebreaker

Scalebreaker was forged at the behest of the orc grand chieftain Uhrod Bloodaxe. Uhrod sought to rid his people of the twin burdens (tribute and sacrifices) imposed by the great red dragon known only as Anathema, her true name now forgotten by all but the oldest elves. The source of conflict between the crafty orc and the dragon was the question of dominance over territories claimed by both. Anathema cared little for the discomfort of any creatures within her domain. Uhrod, on the other hand, had determined that the dragon should die as soon as possible.

Uhrod's shamans lacked the ability to craft a weapon of sufficient power to crush Anathema, so he commissioned the only arcane master with whom his tribe was on speaking terms, the elderly Blaenek the Patient, to forge and enchant an orc double axe in exchange for one thousand pounds of gold and uncontested ownership of lands adjacent to the mage's holdings. All went well, but Blaenek did not survive the strain of adding the final ability, and Uhrod rejoiced at the thought of not having to pay the wizard's exorbitant fee. Pressing his luck, the orc chieftain sacked Blaenek's stronghold, seized the axe, and took up residence. Little did Uhrod suspect that Blaenek had become a lich after his demise and would eventually seek out the orc chieftain and collect his fee, with interest.

Remarkably prudent for an orc and not entirely trusting Blaenek, Uhrod decided to test the axe's power on a slightly less dangerous foe, Anathema's progeny, the dragon Nightcandle. Uhrod chose his tribe's champion, the half-orc Kra'l, to wield *Scalebreaker*. The perfect opportunity for the test presented itself in the form of a request for aid from Letrathe. She doubted Gryr's loyalty and assumed that the ranger would slay her if he knew the truth behind her ancestry. Uhrod was more than willing to lend the services of Kra'l to the half-dragon because it placed Letrathe in his debt. When facing Letrathe's sire, the berserk Kra'l used *Scalebreaker* to savage effect but was eventually slain by the dragon, who pinned the barbarian beneath his body and heated the half-orc's iron body with dragonfire until it melted into a pool of slag.

Scalebreaker is a deadly looking *+2 orc double axe,* but its quality and workmanship make it quite clear that it was not forged by orcs. It is fashioned entirely of black iron and is consequently rather heavy. *Scalebreaker's* true purpose is to slay dragons, regardless of size, age, color, or disposition. The axe allows its bearer to transform his body into living iron once per day on command, as the *iron body* spell, for a duration of 15 minutes. The wielder gains the immunities, damage reduction, benefits, and penalties of this form. Unfortunately, *Scalebreaker* welds itself to the hands of its wielder for the duration of this effect and cannot be removed, dropped, thrown, or handed to another, nor can the wielder be disarmed. This makes casting spells with material or somatic components impossible. In this state, however, the wielder becomes a virtual juggernaut.

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *iron body;* **Market Price:** 102,400 gp; **Cost to Create:** 51,860 gp + 4,096 XP; **Weight:** 30 lb.

Beguiler of Wyrms

Durnen the minstrel was the offspring of a doomed marriage of convenience. Senna, his mother, was the only daughter of the human bandit-king Tarret the Cunning, and his father was the elf-prince Hiloyn. Their union sealed the breach between the two leaders for the duration of Tarret's life. The bandit-king was slain and his followers scattered by the red dragon Nightcandle when he decided to make Tarret's cliffside stronghold his own. Soon after, Senna perished under circumstances that many thought unusual, and Hiloyn disowned Durnen upon the excuse that he had never agreed to the union between the elf and human, thereby severing his last link with a disagreeable situation.

Durnen resented this treatment at the hands of

Letrathe's skin protected her against the fire of her father's breath, but she lost the battle of minds inside the armor's diamond.

Scalebreaker proved to be the death of Kra'l, as the half-orc perished beneath the Howling Wyrm's body. Nor did Frosthaven save the ranger Gryr from Nightcandle's claws, though it crippled the red dragon's limb.

his father and suspected the elf-prince had had his mother assassinated. He found both acceptance and a new, if somewhat uncouth, life among humans. He eventually married and had a son, Wernden.

Durnen made money performing, first in the streets, then in taverns, and eventually in palaces. It was there that he met his father once again, and all his spite returned. He realized then the key to his revenge. Hiloyn had given Tarret an emerald-studded necklace of elven craftsmanship to cement his betrothal to the bandit-king's daughter. With the necklace, Durnen could return to Hiloyn's court and make a valid claim as first-born son. The ensuing scandal would be vengeance enough.

Unfortunately, the necklace now resided in the hoard of Nightcandle. Over the next few years, Durnen called upon all he knew of elven artistry and constructed a mandolin of perfect tone and beauty. He then infused it with magic of the subtlest kind, enhancing its ability to charm the listener. All that remained was to use it to bilk a dragon of a treasure. It was with some misgivings that he joined forces with Letrathe and her band of slayers, but the bard reasoned that if music should fail, then strength of arms might prevail.

Wernden, just out of boyhood, accompanied his father to Nightcandle's lair. Durnen succeeded in entertaining the dragon and pleaded his case for a small reward. The dragon, still under the effects of the bard's music, agreed. As Durnen crawled amid the piles of jewels, coins, and other wealth, he discovered the necklace and prepared to make his exit. It was then that Letrathe and her mercenaries struck. Durnen was the first to feel Nightcandle's fury, and the gout of flame that claimed his life blasted his charred corpse out of the cave and down the escarpment below. From the cave mouth, Wernden saw what befell his father and the others. The bard still carries the necklace his father strove so hard to recover, but he has not used it to discredit Hiloyn, who seems willing to let the passing years dispose of his former family. Nor does Wernden seek to reclaim his father's lost mandolin from Nightcandle. The *Beguiler of Wyrms* remains amid the heaps of plunder in the Howling Wyrm's lair.

The *Beguiler of Wyrms* is a mandolin of the highest quality, and it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Perform checks as a masterwork instrument. Despite its quality, the instrument is beginning to show wear after two decades of neglect. It is fashioned from exotic woods with a bridge of carved amber and strings of dryad hair. Beautiful inlays in the shapes of leaves, berries, and other sylvan themes decorate the mandolin. When played by a bard, the *Beguiler of Wyrms* adds +10 to the DC of the bard's *fascination* and *suggestion* abilities against any dragon.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be a bard with the fascination and suggestion abilities; **Market Price:** 18,850 gp; **Cost to Create:** 9,475 gp + 750 XP; **Weight:** 3 lb.

Frosthaven (or *Flameshroud*)

The little-known mountaineer Morut Rimewind had *Frosthaven* crafted by the mage Altain after suffering horrible wounds from a battle with a clutch of white dragon wyrmlings. Rimewind garnered a sack full of gems from that fight, so the greedy mage knew he could pay well. Altain, sensing an opportunity for greater profit, convinced Rimewind to forego mere resistance to frost and consider ways to harm his attackers as well. Thus, the shield known as *Frosthaven* was born of Rimewind's paranoia and Altain's lust for jewels. Both were satisfied with the bargain.

Rimewind carried the shield until he met his end within the bowels of a remorhaz, and the shield not only survived but also slowly froze its devourer from within. An ice mephit found it years later and traded *Frosthaven* to a dwarven outcast named Hulden in exchange for its life. Hulden knew only of the shield's power to protect him from fire, so he named it *Flameshroud*. He carried the shield to more temperate climes and bore it for nearly twenty years before perishing at the hands of his clansmen. The shield passed from dwarven hands soon after Hulden's death and was later acquired by an unscrupulous traveling arms merchant named Veluus.

The callous ranger Gryr recognized it from his time spent roving with Hulden and purchased it from Veluus. The half-elf also pieced together the history and true nature of the shield, partly from drunken tales Hulden had related to him and partly through a sizeable bribe paid to one of Altain's apprentices for the wizard's journal. Gryr usually fought shieldless and kept *Frosthaven* more from sentiment than usefulness. It was only when Letrathe hired him to fight against Nightcandle that he decided to make good use of the shield against his new favored enemy—dragons.

Frosthaven allowed him to

survive Nightcandle's initial assault and wound the wyrm terribly in return. The enraged dragon retaliated by crushing Gryr within its claws, but *Frosthaven* burned the dragon's limb to a withered stump in a blaze of cold flames.

Frosthaven is a *+2 small steel shield.* The steel has an unusual purplish sheen that resulted from Altain's unique tempering process, and the surface of the shield has a flaming six-pointed star engraved upon it. Once per day, the bearer can command *Frosthaven* to activate its *fire shield* ability, which acts as the spell cast by a 10th-level caster. The bearer of the shield will then take half damage from the specified element. In addition, any creature striking the wielder with its body or handheld weapons deals normal damage, but at the same time the attacker takes 1d6+10 points damage. This damage is either cold (if the shield is currently protecting against fire-based attacks) or fire (if the shield is currently protecting against cold-based attacks). If a creature has spell resistance, it applies to this damage (the level check is made as if by a 10th-level sorcerer). Note that weapons with exceptional reach, such as longspears, do not endanger their users in this way.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fire shield;* **Market Price:** 32,959 gp; **Cost to Create:** 16,559 gp + 1,312 XP; **Weight:** 6 lb.

Houn's Grand Compendium Volume VIII: Draco Conflagratio Horribilis

Sages and mages disagree whether this volume is the work of the seemingly ageless chronicler Houn, author of the fabled library of spellbooks known as Houn's Hundred, or the work of a talented imitator. The title suggests that the compendium is not simply a curiosity, but rather part of a greater set detailing all dragonkind.

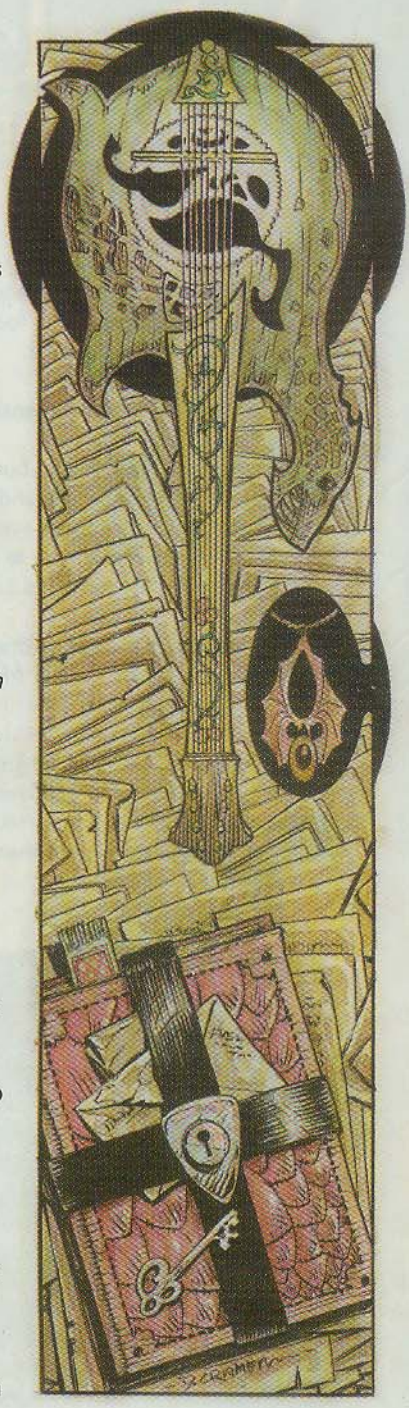
The tome's first documented appearance was in the hands of the loremaster Trin Hewneth, who recovered it from the entourage of animated objects accompanying a huge ravid. Hewneth eventually traded the grand compendium to an associate, the sorcerer Elouryn, whose temperament was more suited to adventuring. Elouryn tried to locate other volumes of the grand compendium without success. It resided in her possession for some years until thieves looted her home. Finding little of obvious value, they pilfered most of the books in her library and sold the lot to a "gray trader," a specialist in handling stolen merchandise. Elouryn recovered her collection with the single exception of the grand compendium.

It resurfaced in the hands of Adoc the Voiceless, a ruthless and efficient rogue who gained his nickname by surviving a slit throat. Adoc, though unable to speak, still managed to accumulate a great deal of wealth through the practice of extortion. Adoc (who preferred to be called "the Silent") acquired the tome from one of his clients in lieu of coin. He cataloged it as he did all his wealth, and it languished unread until Letrathe hired him to assist in exterminating a clutch of young red dragons. After suffering a number of wounds from one of the dragons, Adoc's interest in the work was renewed.

Adoc's casual perusal became fervent study when the half-dragon ogre mage proposed an expedition against the far more dangerous wyrm Nightcandle. There is no doubt that Adoc benefited from reading the grand compendium since he survived longest against the dragon and managed to take it by surprise. He dropped from the ceiling upon Nightcandle's massive head and put out the dragon's eyes with a pair of daggers. Adoc was confident that he had free rein to loot while the blinded dragon vainly sought him. Had he read the grand compendium more thoroughly, he would have never taken such a foolish risk. The tome remains at the bottom of his pack with many jewels and coins piled atop it, now just another addition to the hoard of the Howling Wyrm.

Houn's Grand Compendium is a detailed treatise that imparts an almost supernatural understanding of the weaknesses, strengths, instincts, and behaviors typical of red dragons. After reading the book, the reader benefits from the manual in three ways. First, the reader becomes learned on the subject of red dragons, gaining a +8 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge checks concerning information related to red dragons (their habitat, physiology, diet, and habits). Second, the reader gains an insight into how red dragons hunt and respond to threats. As such, he gains a +4 bonus to initiative, but only when fighting red dragons. Third, the reader gains a +6 bonus to Will saves when resisting a red dragon's frightful presence. The reader cannot benefit from the grand compendium more than once in his lifetime.

Caster Level: 12th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *legend lore;* **Market Price:** 11,100 gp; **Cost to Create:** 5,550 gp + 444 XP; **Weight:** 5 lb.



Even with the Beguiler of Wyrms, Durnen the bard could not defeat Nightcandle. Adoc the Silent might have fared better had he finished studying Houn's Grand Compendium before trying to loot the lair of the Howling Wyrm.

VS. DRAGONS

BY JESSE DECKER

The new D&D rules have made dragons what they should be—the most dangerous foes you're likely to meet.

The best strategy when you encounter a dragon is to run.
Dragons are innately tough, but their intelligence, varied abilities, and maneuverability make them even more deadly when they have time to prepare—meeting a dragon in its lair is a good recipe for disaster.

The Challenge Ratings for dragons, unlike other creatures in the *Monster Manual*, is set for a party that has specifically prepared to meet that kind of dragon. Thus, facing a dragon without proper preparation exposes an adventuring group to great risk for less reward (experience points) than you would otherwise receive.

The second best strategy is to talk your way out of the fight.
If the dragon is too much for you to handle on first encounter—which it probably is—give it what it wants, and come back when you're better prepared.

Preparation

Cast protection and enhancement spells ahead of time.
Dragons attack with their characteristic breath weapons, making *protection from elements* a must. At lower levels, *resist elements* works well too. Battles with a dragon are brutal; if your group is to survive, the fight must be short. This means spellcasters higher than 5th level won't have enough time to exhaust their spell selection during the encounter, so cast spells before the fight. Leave the spellcasters some offensive options, but anyone who's likely to get close to the dragon needs every *cat's grace, bull's strength,* or *protection from evil* spell they can get. Since dragons have good saving throws, use low-level spells to prepare your party members, and save high-level, hard-to-resist spells for combat. Some of the best spells to use when preparing to face a dragon include *fly, greater magic weapon, see invisibility* (against spellcasting dragons), *daylight, shield other, aid, remove fear,* and *stoneskin.*

Counter the mobility advantage.
Dragons are swift fliers, and most use either Hover or Flyby Attack to make the most of their maneuverability. One of the most important steps in preparing to face a dragon is finding a way to counter its mobility. The obvious counter is the *fly* spell, but only high-level groups will have enough to send everyone aloft without also depleting their store of offensive magic. *Fly* is best used on melee specialists, allowing them to engage the dragon wherever it moves. Spellcasters with ranged spells and archers don't need the ability to *fly* if resources are scarce, but everyone should try to increase their movement rate. *Expeditious retreat* is great for this purpose; it gives characters a better chance to stay with the dragon in a running battle and it's only a 1st-level spell.

Prepare multiple threats.
Make sure everyone has a way to deal damage to the dragon every round. Although a dragon's formidable defenses make it unlikely that every blow will connect, it's important to stay on the offensive against a dragon. Every character should have an action that has at least a chance of inflicting damage. At low levels, this means throwing alchemist's fire or acid. At high levels, it might mean crafting a new wand, preparing some extra scrolls, or upgrading that longbow to a mighty composite longbow. Like dealing with a dragon's mobility, this preparation also involves casting long-duration spells like *greater magic weapon* before the fight.

COLOR BY COLOR

Since most PCs fight evil dragons more often than good, here are a few things to keep in mind when facing a specific type of chromatic dragon.

White Young white dragons are very susceptible to fireball. Whites have some of the least hospitable lairs of all dragons, so take care that your group is not weakened by long exposure to cold.

Black Water, rather than acid, typifies an encounter with a black dragon. Make sure everyone can swim. *Water walk,* although an excellent spell, doesn't work well. Who wants a dragon to attack from below?

Green Green dragons, like black dragons, are excellent swimmers, but a green dragon's forest home is easier to navigate than a swamp. If trees surround the encounter area, potions of *spider climb* are a cheap way to make sure everyone can navigate the treetops safely.

Blue A blue dragon's ability to burrow makes it hard to control the encounter—expect several surprises in any situation involving blue dragons. Don't believe your ears either; their voice mimicry abilities can split a party or draw a scout into a trap. Stay together, consider using a *silence* spell to cover your approach, and prepare hand signals to thwart the dragon's mimicry.

Red The most terrifying of the chromatic dragons, red dragons are vulnerable to cold attacks, but their hit points, great saving throws, and formidable spell resistance make them able to withstand almost anything. Many red dragons are powerful spellcasters with charm and suggestion abilities, making it important to keep *dispel magic* spells in reserve.

Have an escape plan.
Dragons, in addition to being tough, are smart and hard to fool. Chances are they'll guess and counter at least some of your preparations, so make sure you have a way to get out if things go bad. A *rope trick* spell cast just outside the dragon's lair provides a good place for the wounded to hide. High-level PCs should keep powerful *teleport* or *word of recall* spells in reserve.

Tactics

Fight only the dragon.
Dragons use weaker creatures and summoned monsters to guard their lairs, soften up their foes, and cover their few weaknesses. Make sure that you fight only the dragon. Don't engage the dragon until you're relatively sure that any servants and allies are destroyed or too far away to lend aid. You can often fight these creatures in areas where the dragon cannot lend aid to its minions. If you do encounter a dragon with its allies, don't waste time with the lackeys. Concentrate all of your attacks on bringing the dragon down quickly.

Control the environment.
Dragons have every advantage in darkness. They can hide or use spells to avoid darkvision, and their keen senses mean that they'll detect all but the most careful intruders. Instead of remaining in the dark and playing to the dragon's strength, surround the party with light, including *daylight* spells if possible. Rather than hiding from the dragon, maximize your chances of detecting it.

Dragons love to turn their lairs against intruders, using movement abilities such as swim or burrow to surprise intruders and provide an easy escape. A dragon's best defense is often its knowledge of its lair and the area around it. Spells that can radically alter the environment, such as *control water* or *wall of stone,* can take away the dragon's ability to hide, making sure that the group can keep the pressure on. Spells aren't the only answer. Melee fighters with good movement rates can keep the dragon on the defensive.

Prevent the dragon from taking the full attack action.
The need to avoid a dragon's breath weapon is obvious, but preparation rather than position is the surest defense against a dragon's breath. In a battle with a dragon, position simply means not starting the round next to the monster. Even small dragons have a good chance of hitting most characters multiple times in a single round if given the chance. For this reason, the best anti-dragon feat is Spring Attack.

Dragons of Large size or greater have reach, so avoiding a full attack is even harder. Melee fighters without Spring Attack have their work cut out for them. If the dragon has reach, you can use *haste* and a reach weapon of your own so that you can move close to the dragon, attack, and move away. You'll provoke an attack of opportunity (usually a bite attack), but unless your Armor Class is high, risking one extra bite while moving away is much better than risking a bite, two claw attacks, two wing buffets, and one tail slap on the dragon's turn. Another good option is to arm every character with an effective range weapon—refusing to close with the dragon is one of the best ways to avoid its fearsome melee abilities.

Split the dragon's attention.
If a dragon turns its full attention to one party member, that character's next encounter will most likely be with a *raise dead* spell. Keeping a dragon from annihilating one character means attacking from different directions; any time the dragon closes with a character, that character should take a total defense action and move away. Then, preferably in the same round, other characters should attack from different directions. Even if the dragon continues to pursue the first character, that PC benefits from an increased AC and is out of reach of the dragon's full attack.

IT'S YOUR DRAGON NOW

Dragons have elemental subtypes, which means that clerics with elemental domains can potentially score big in any dragon encounter. It's a long shot, but it is possible to control or turn a dragon if you have the right elemental domain. Without extremely lucky rolls and the Heighten Turning feat, it's impossible to control a dragon whose CR is anywhere near your level (they have too many Hit Dice), but you might manage to take the dragon's hatchlings out of the fight while you concentrate on slaying the big one.

Dragon	Type	Rebuked/Controlled by	Turned/Destroyed by
White	Cold	None	None
Black	Water	Water	Fire
Green	Air	Air	Earth
Blue	Earth	Earth	Air
Red	Fire	Fire	Water
Brass	Fire	Fire	Water
Copper	Earth	Earth	Air
Bronze	Water	Water	Fire
Silver	Air	Air	Earth
Gold	Fire	Fire	Water

What Doesn't Work

Invisibility.
Dragons see everything. Their blindsight, intelligence, and spell abilities make dragons nearly impossible to fool. Go in quickly rather than stealthily—don't give the dragon time to prepare by trying to sneak up on it.

Charging.
Most dragons have reach, so they'll get opportunity attacks when you charge. Plus, if you charge, the dragon will likely start its action close enough to you to make a full attack. Charge only if your goal is to roll up a new character.

Allowing saving throws.
Since most dragons have spell resistance, avoid spells that also allow saving throws to reduce their effects. Although dragons don't have fantastic saving throws, they're certainly not weak. Giving a dragon an additional chance to resist a spell makes it too likely that the spell caster won't affect the dragon.

A Very Special Nodwick Anniversary
HI! WELCOME TO OUR SORT OF TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY THINGIE!
MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW IT, BUT WE'VE BEEN WITH DRAGON MAGAZINE SINCE THE BEGINNING, AND IT'S BEEN A MOSTLY SPIFFY-KEEN EXPERIENCE FOR US!
IT WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO WHEN WE ASKED DRAGON ABOUT APPEARING IN ITS PAGES...
THIS LOOKS GREAT! WHO KNEW HENCHMEN WERE SO FUNNY?
OH, YEAH. WE'RE A LAUGH RIOT!
SO YOU'LL SIGN US UP AS A REGULAR FEATURE?
WELL, WE RAN YOUR FIRST CARTOON, AND, UNFORTUNATELY, PRINTING IT IN COLOR WIPED OUT OUR FEATURES BUDGET FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS OR SO.
OH. ER, HOW MANY COPIES DID YOU PRINT?
ONE. WE'LL KEEP IT OUT IN THE RECEPTION AREA. DON'T WORRY, WE PLAN ON PUTTING YOU GUYS IN STASIS PODS UNTIL WE CAN AFFORD YOU.
YOU CAN'T AFFORD COLOR PRINTING, BUT YOU'VE GOT STASIS PODS?
WE'VE GOT PHENOMENAL SALESMEN!
THEY EVENTUALLY LET US OUT, AND YEAGAR DID SOME NOT-NICE THINGS TO THEIR EMPLOYEE LOUNGE. WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO APPEARING REGULARLY IN PRINT.
HOWEVER, SOME OF OUR EARLY ADVENTURES WEREN'T EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.
ONWARD IN SEARCH OF THE LONE OPOSSUM THAT HOLDS THIS NEARLY-ABANDONED FARM IN TERROR!
WE JUST WANT HIM TO STOP EATIN' OUR BEETS!
I DO BELIEVE WE'VE FOUND THE NECRONOMICRON!
A TOME OF SUPREME NAUGHTINESS FOR WORSHIPPERS OF K'SULU!
GUYS! CHECK THIS OUT! THIS RUIN WAS CALLED--
MISCATATON UNIVERSITY
LAWSUIT ON LINE ONE!
WHAT?! THIS ADVENTURE HAD DRAGONS, DEMONS, THREE ORCISH HORDES AND MORE MAYHEM THAN A BATHROOM AT GEN CON! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?!
A LITTLE MORE VARIETY THAN YOU TOSSING YOUR HENCHMAN AT THEM AND YELLING "FEEDING TIME!"
YOU TOLD ME HE WAS VOLUNTEERING TO LEAD THE CHARGE!
"VOLUNTEER" IS SUCH A... NEBULOUS TERM...
OOOOH... I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT THAT ONE.
UM, LATER, WE FOUND THAT ADVENTURES BASED ON CLASSIC DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS PRODUCTS WERE WELL-RECIEVED... MOSTLY.
SO MUCH FOR THAT PURPLE WORM!
I STILL SAY THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN A "POWER WORD: KILL" CARD IN THIS GAME BEFORE...
AND I STILL SAY THAT YOUR "HENCHMAN SHIELD" CARD LOOKS LIKE IT WAS MADE FROM A MILK CARTON.
CAN WE PLAY "HI-HO CHERRY-O?" WE CAN PRETEND THE TREES ARE CHERRY TREANTS.
WE'VE GOT IT! THE BLACK LOTUS!
ARE YOU SURE THIS "MALL" PLACE IS A HAVEN OF EVIL ICKYNESS?
DON'T LET THE WOMEN WITH THE STROLLERS FOOL YOU; YOU SAW WHAT THEY CHARGED FOR PARKING!

WE'RE STILL DOING COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR THE DAMAGE TO THAT STORE...
...AND WE WISH MR. BLYDEN A SPEEDY RECOVERY FROM YEAGAR TOSSING HIM INTO A PRETZEL CART IN THE FOOD COURT.
OOPSIE.
NOW WE HAVE SOME CLIPS FROM OUR DRAGON DICE ADVENTURE WHERE--
SORRY, BUT A FIRE DESTROYED THE EVIDENCE--ER, FOOTAGE FROM THAT.
I GUESS YOU WON'T BE NEEDING A LAWYER AFTER ALL, HUH, ARTAX?
CHEF +5
HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?
OH! OKAY. LET'S SEE HERE...
YEAGAR SWUNG HIS MIGHTY SWORD, FELLING TIAMAT AS HANK, BOBBY, ERIC, AND PRESTO LOOKED ON...
DIANA AND SHIELA WERE HELD FAST BY VENGER'S SPELLS, BUT THEY WOULD SOON BE FREED BY THIS HERO OF HEROES WHOSE VERY NAME STRUCK FEAR IN--
I KIND OF THINK I'D REMEMBER SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
HE BOUGHT OFF AN ARTIST! LOOK! THE PANELS ARE TAPED TO THE PAGES!
AT LEAST I'M NOT GETTING THE COOKIES BEATEN OUT OF ME IN THIS ONE.
NOT UNTIL PAGE TWO, ANYWAY.
THERE THEY ARE!!
WHO--?
WE'RE THE AUTHORS OF THE MODULES THAT YOU'VE MADE MOCKERIES OF!
AND WE'RE THE D.M.'S WHO'VE HAD THEIR CAMPAIGNS RUINED BY YOU GIVING AWAY THE ENDINGS TO OUR PLAYERS!
EXIT
OH, NO! AUTHORS AND ROLEPLAYERS! HOW WILL WE EVER SURVIVE?
WE CAN'T HURT THEM! REMEMBER: RETREAT IS THE BETTER PART OF ALIGNMENT VIOLATIONS!
OH, WE WON'T HURT YOU...
BEHOLD THE WRATH OF GYGAX!!
MY "S" SERIES OF MODULES SHALL BE AVENGED!
EGG
WELL, THIS IS A DISASTER.
HARDLY! THE ADVERTISERS ARE THROWING TONS OF MONEY AT US THANKS TO THESE GUYS!
YES... THREE THOUSAND AND WE WON'T LET THEM NEAR YOUR PRODUCTS FOR A FULL YEAR. OH, NO, THANK YOU!

FORUM

Send email to: forum@wizards.com
"Forum" c/o *Dragon Magazine*
1801 Lind Ave. S.W. • Renton, WA 98055

Respect Goes Both Ways

I found the tone of Julie Ratliff's Forum submission (titled "Voice of Reason," no less) in *Dragon* #280, to be improper. She wrote of Adam C. in a degrading and hostile manner. (For example, "Adam, I suggest you learn to broaden your horizons," and "That's right Adam, we outnumber you.") This neither furthers the opinions she expressed nor treats Adam with the respect he deserves, being a contributor to "Forum" who had the courage to express his opinion. Such a degrading tone appears regularly in "Forum," however. Please, people, let us try to treat each other with respect, even as we express our ideas.

With regard to the pronoun issue: I believe that the consistent use of a single third-person pronoun makes for stronger writing and simpler reading. For good or for ill, the gender issue is a sensitive one. I propose that written material published by Wizards of the Coast use the feminine third-person pronoun exclusively (as the "neutral" pronoun), except when referring to a specific male person. This would not be distracting to most women. Nor would it be distracting to most men, perhaps because men are not members of a gender that has been improperly treated as inferior for centuries.

Though it is of less importance to me, from a marketing point of view, Wizards of the Coast would draw more attention to itself, perhaps praise as well, and perhaps even sell more role-playing game material. Regardless, until the English writing establishment invents new, purely neutral forms of the third-person pronouns, this seems the best way to proceed.

Jean-Philippe Suter
Randolph, NJ

Hardy Women

In response to Jean-Philippe Suter's house rule giving female humans and demihumans a -2 penalty to rolled Strength, compensating with the gender-exclusive ability to bear children, I would like to suggest that the two are not equivalent for compensation purposes. The female character is being given an in-game minus "balanced" by an out-of-game plus. In fact, the necessity to restrict the female's adventuring abilities for the child-bearing period, not to mention the child-raising period, is hardly a plus.

Even if one does not consider that, the ability to bear children is more appropriately matched by the male's ability to beget children. Assuming that the ability to beget children is an advantage for males, could we justify a -2 penalty to Wisdom as compensation?

If females are to be given a -2 penalty to Strength, an appropriate compensation would be to give them a +2 bonus to Constitution. It has been amply shown, statistically and in real life, that while males, on average, are stronger than females, females, on average, have greater endurance to exhaustion, famine, and stress. Greater average Strength will give the male the edge in combat through better attack rolls and damage, and for Strength and Strength-based skill checks. However, the female's greater average Constitution gives her a hit point advantage, a bonus to resist poison, disease, and exhaustion, and Concentration bonuses. The edge this gives to female spellcasters is more than offset by the greater combat skills of male fighters. I believe that this is fair and does not penalize females for being females.

Dorothy V. McComb
Rahway, NJ

Balance of Power?

I was very intrigued by the house rule Jean-Philippe Suter shared (*Dragon* #281). However, I have a couple of questions that need clarifying. How, exactly, has the ability to bear children so unbalanced his games that he feels a -2 Strength penalty is appropriate for his female characters? More curiously, how often has this wondrous ability actually come into play?

Oh, pardon me, he also said, "I prefer the women in my D&D games to have to same relative body size and proportions, relative to the men, that men and women have in the real world."

Considering that Mr. Suter is concerned with real-life proportions, perhaps he would consider a similar rule penalizing male human and demihuman characters with a -2 to their initial Intelligence roll, for the "gender-exclusive" ability to think with two different parts of their body. I wonder which one Jean-Philippe was using when he thought of this rule?

Kerry R.
Seattle, WA

Ready to Rumble

I write this letter in response to Jean-Philippe Suter's short submission to "Forum" in issue #281. Mr. Suter has a house rule that gives female characters a -2 penalty to their initial rolled Strength score, but he graciously gives them the gender-exclusive ability to bear children. He established this rule to make his campaign more "realistic." I submit that Mr. Suter's grasp of females and their abilities is limited to say the least. Granted, some females might be slighter of build than some males, and his -2 to Strength might be justified. I would suggest that this penalty be balanced with some "realistic" bonuses.

First off, lets give females the +2 to Charisma we all know they deserve. Lets face it, a woman is a work of art,

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:
WHAT WAS YOUR SINGLE GREATEST MOMENT AS A DM? WHAT MADE IT GREAT?

and a man is basically a smelly ape with hair loss issues. Then the ladies get their +2 to Wisdom and Intelligence. Anyone who disputes this fact does not have a female to tell him where his keys, wallet, and belt are at six-o-clock in the morning. Females get +2 to Dexterity. How else could they balance the checkbook, a full time job, three kids, putting the lid down because you won't, and washing your dirty underwear?

Finally, as to the gender specific ability to have children, I believe that Mr. Suter would have a difficult time finding any woman who would consider this a benefit. The baby is a benefit (or at least a deduction), but the birthing process is a curse. Mr. Suter might understand this if he ever gets a kidney stone. He might wish he had a female's +2 to Constitution.

P.S. I would die to know how many letters you get exactly like this one! I know DRAGON printed Mr. Suter's contribution because they knew good folks like me would have meltdowns.

Dino Sorrelle
Birmingham, AL

Irresponsible Editors

After reading Jean-Philippe Suter's letter, "Little Women" in the "Forum" section of *DRAGON* #281, I felt I had to respond, both to Mr. Suter and to *DRAGON Magazine*.

To Mr. Suter, I have to question why you, as a DM, would assign a -2 Strength penalty to female characters, and "balance" it with the "gender-exclusive ability to bear children." The female gender-exclusive ability "to bear children" is as implicit as the male gender-exclusive ability "to write one's name in the snow," and "granting" it to female characters doesn't add anything to the game that wasn't there already (except maybe some kind of foreshadowing). As for the -2 to Strength, I have to wonder whether this is to deter male players from creating female characters or to deter female players from joining your gaming group, because it's wholly unnecessary for character balance or realism.

As a DM you have the opportunity to create male or female NPCs as you wish. NPCs represent 99.9% of the people who populate the world. PCs, on the other hand, are exceptions to the norm. Why should players who are inspired by historical figures, such as Boadicea and Joan of Arc, mythological ones, such as Hippolyta and Morrigan, or fictional ones, such as Xena, be discouraged from modeling their characters after them?

To *DRAGON*, I have to question the editorial wisdom of printing this particular letter in "Forum." The hobby has progressed over the last few decades, and while still being male-dominated, there are many long-time female gamers, and there has been an ever-growing number joining the ranks. Printing this article serves as a reminder of one of the reasons why the hobby (and D&D in particular) has taken its time to catch on with women in the first place.

Richard Keehn
Kochi City, Japan

Fighting the Good Fight

This is my first letter to "Forum," though I've been a subscriber to *DRAGON* for quite some time. The other day I was looking back at some articles and websites devoted to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and whether this and other roleplaying games were evil and led our innocent youth into the lurking claws of the occult. This subject is a hobby of mine and was the topic of a term paper I wrote many years ago.

I was looking back over a bunch of articles I've collected and at some interesting websites on the subject, and I got to thinking. One of the best sources for that term paper I wrote was this very "Forum" in *DRAGON*. They ran a series of letters from gamers describing their encounters with those who opposed D&D (or gaming in general), so I was wondering what it's like for everyone now, ten years later. Are you still harassed? Are there still people who think that D&D is the tool of the Devil? Will *DRAGON* run another series of such letters in "Forum"?

Alexander H. MacLeod IV
taragin@bellsouth.net

Back and Better Than Ever

I'm so glad to see people at my high school discussing D&D over lunch, in the halls, and in the classroom. Thank you, Wizards of the Coast, for bringing life to a game I once thought was going to die.

I've played D&D for about six years now. I began when I was twelve and played with my friends regularly. There were only about five people at each game until the new edition came out,

"I'VE FINISHED POLISHING YOUR ARMOR, M'LORD, BUT I FEAR THAT IF YOU MAKE ME POLISH YOUR SHIELD, I SHALL PERISH FROM BLOOD LOSS."

and now I could easily get twenty! I'm not exaggerating at all! I have a lot of new guys asking almost every Wednesday wanting to get in on my game on Friday. The rules are a whole hell of a lot easier for my new players, but I catch myself falling back into 2nd Edition rules from time to time. "What's your THACo again?"

Jason Gaddie
Cub Run, KY

I HAVE MANY QUALMS ABOUT 3RD EDITION, BUT ONE IRKS ME MOST OF ALL.

Wussy Wizards

I have many qualms with 3rd Edition D&D, but one irks me most of all. As a devout player of wizards, I have always felt a general lack of power, but that lack becomes painfully clear in the new edition.

First, picture this: a 1st-level human wizard vs. a 1st-level human fighter, both combat-oriented (but in 3rd Edition it's hard for it to be any other way). A wizard has five spells per day with an 18 Intelligence. The most damage the wizard can deal is 1d8+1 with a spell (assuming the touch attack succeeds at a +0 attack bonus), and the wizard can deal this much damage twice a day. A Fighter with an 18 Strength, a longsword, and the feats Power Attack, Cleave, and Weapon Focus (longsword) can deal 1d8+6 (at a +6 attack bonus) every round.

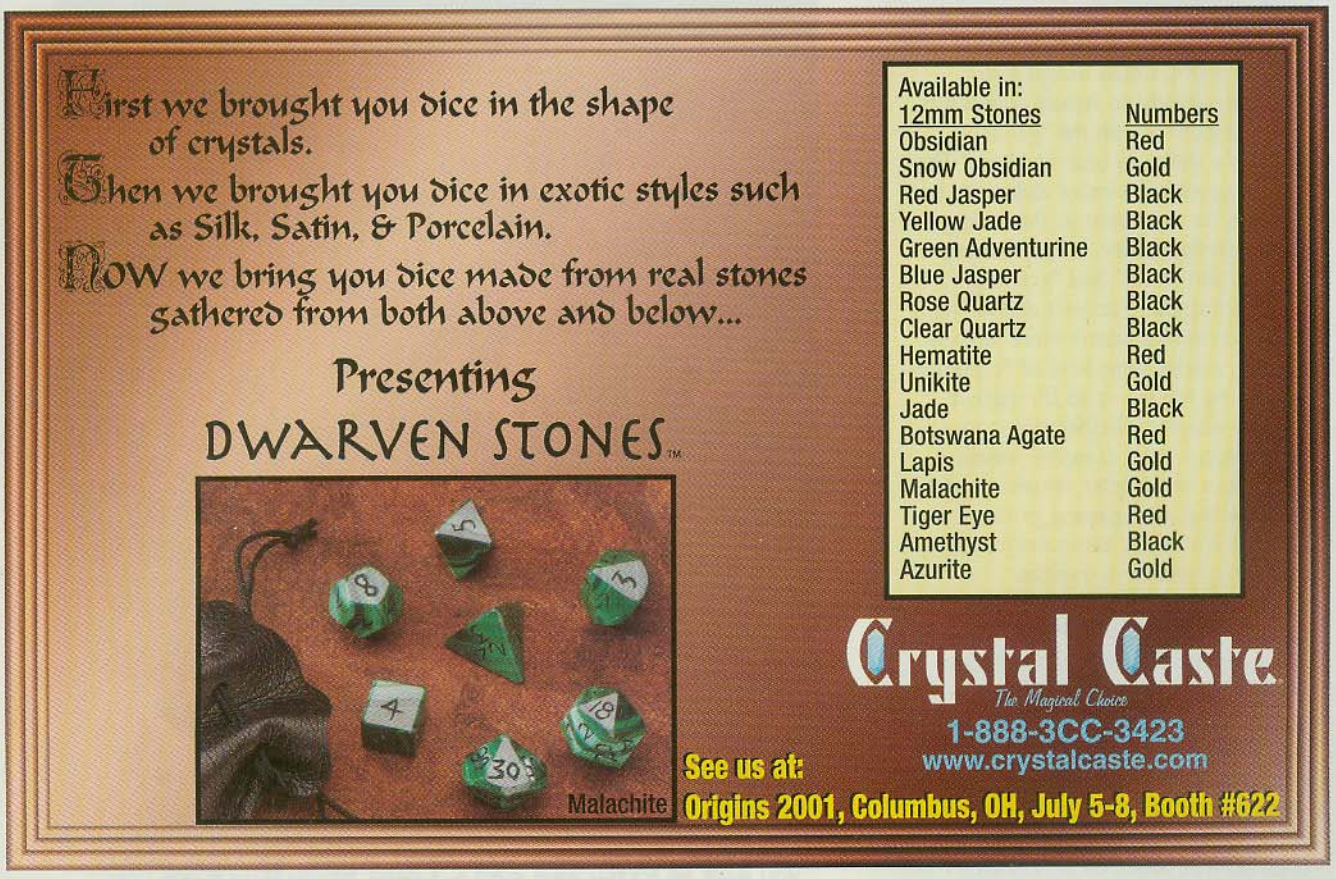
Second, assuming both survive to 6th level, the wizard can now deal 6d6 (a maximum of 36) points of damage over a 20-foot radius thrice a day (but all targets save for half or possibly less damage), whereas that fighter, now with Great Cleave, Weapon Specialization (longsword), and Improved Critical (to say the least) will deal damage at 1d8+13/+8 (max 37) and has the capacity to kill all adjacent enemies each round.

What I am trying to point out here is not how valuable a wizard's spells are but how weak a wizard is in comparison to the fighter (or any other class really). Wizards are suppose to go, "An army of orcs? No problem!" FOOM! And the orcs disappear is a puff of smoke or a giant *fireball*. Not, "I've only got two *fireballs*. What if I need them later? I'll just pick off orcs with my crossbow and let the fighters go at it!" Wizards should not be able to really rely on anything *but* their spells; that's what they train their whole life for.

If anything, I think 1st-level wizards should have a -5 base attack bonus with weapons (+0 with spells) with the option of taking feats that would aid their combat abilities if you want a fighting wizard. Wizards in such a case should also have more spells per day.

All I'm trying to say is wizards can and should be made a little more powerful if they are actually supposed to compete and live in such a world.

Robert Kloeckner
54 Genns Lane
Glenwood, IA 51534

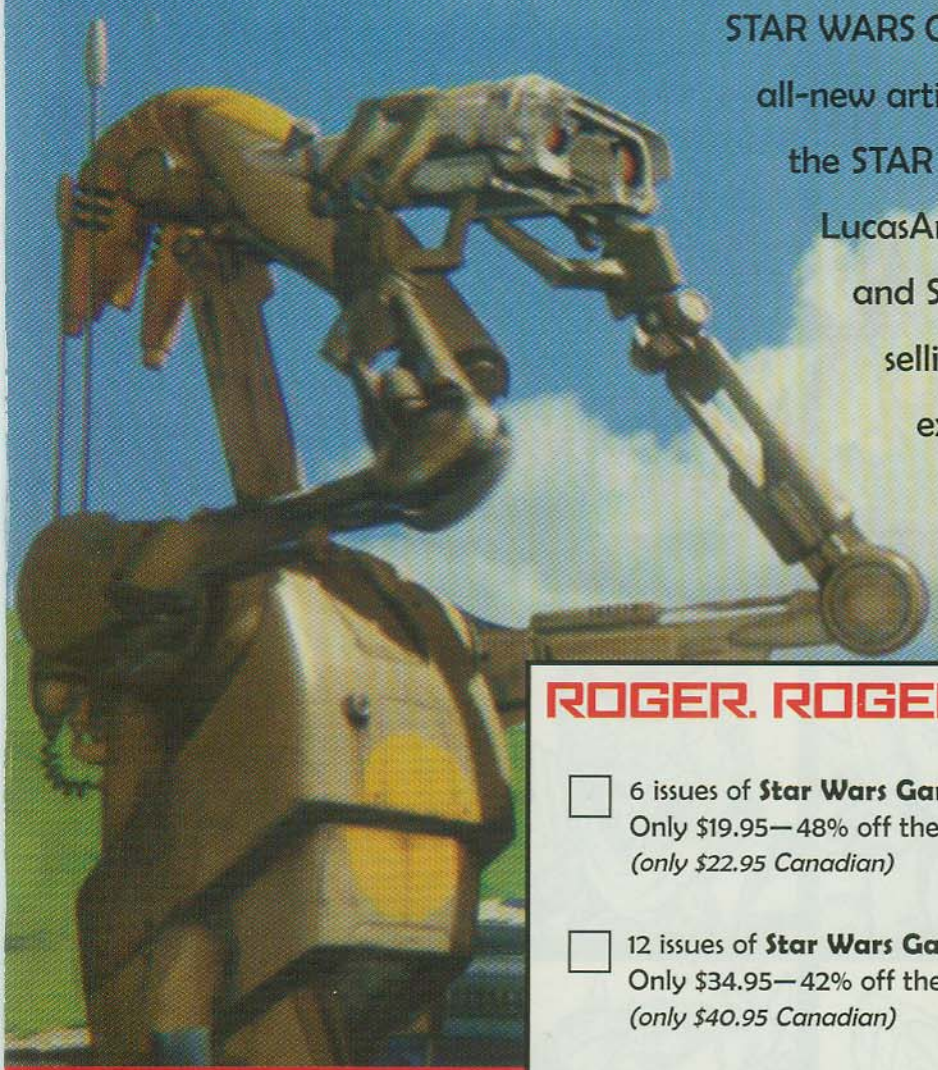

First we brought you dice in the shape of crystals.
Then we brought you dice in exotic styles such as Silk, Satin, & Porcelain.
Now we bring you dice made from real stones gathered from both above and below...
Presenting
DWARVEN STONES™
Malachite
Available in:
12mm Stones | Numbers
Obsidian | Red
Snow Obsidian | Gold
Red Jasper | Black
Yellow Jade | Black
Green Adventurine | Black
Blue Jasper | Black
Rose Quartz | Black
Clear Quartz | Black
Hematite | Red
Unikite | Gold
Jade | Black
Botswana Agate | Red
Lapis | Gold
Malachite | Gold
Tiger Eye | Red
Amethyst | Black
Azurite | Gold
Crystal Caste
The Magical Choice
1-888-3CC-3423
www.crystalcaste.com
See us at:
Origins 2001, Columbus, OH, July 5-8, Booth #622

PASSPORT TO EXCITEMENT!

STAR WARS® Gamer

THE FORCE IN STAR WARS GAMING

The only magazine that puts you in the Star Wars Universe.



Every other month,

STAR WARS Gamer brings you all-new articles and adventures for the STAR WARS Roleplaying Game, LucasArts electronic game coverage, and STAR WARS fiction by best selling authors, all the while exploring new corners of the STAR WARS galaxy!

© 2000 Lucasfilm Ltd.&TM All rights reserved.
Used under authorization.

ROGER. ROGER. Sign me up now.

☐ 6 issues of **Star Wars Gamer**
Only $19.95—48% off the cover price!
(only $22.95 Canadian)

☐ 12 issues of **Star Wars Gamer**
Only $34.95—42% off the cover price!
(only $40.95 Canadian)

☐ Bill Me ☐ Check Enclosed
(US funds only)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE/ COUNTRY _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Mail to: P.O. Box 469122 Escondido, CA 92049-9122

Subscribe Today and Save 48%

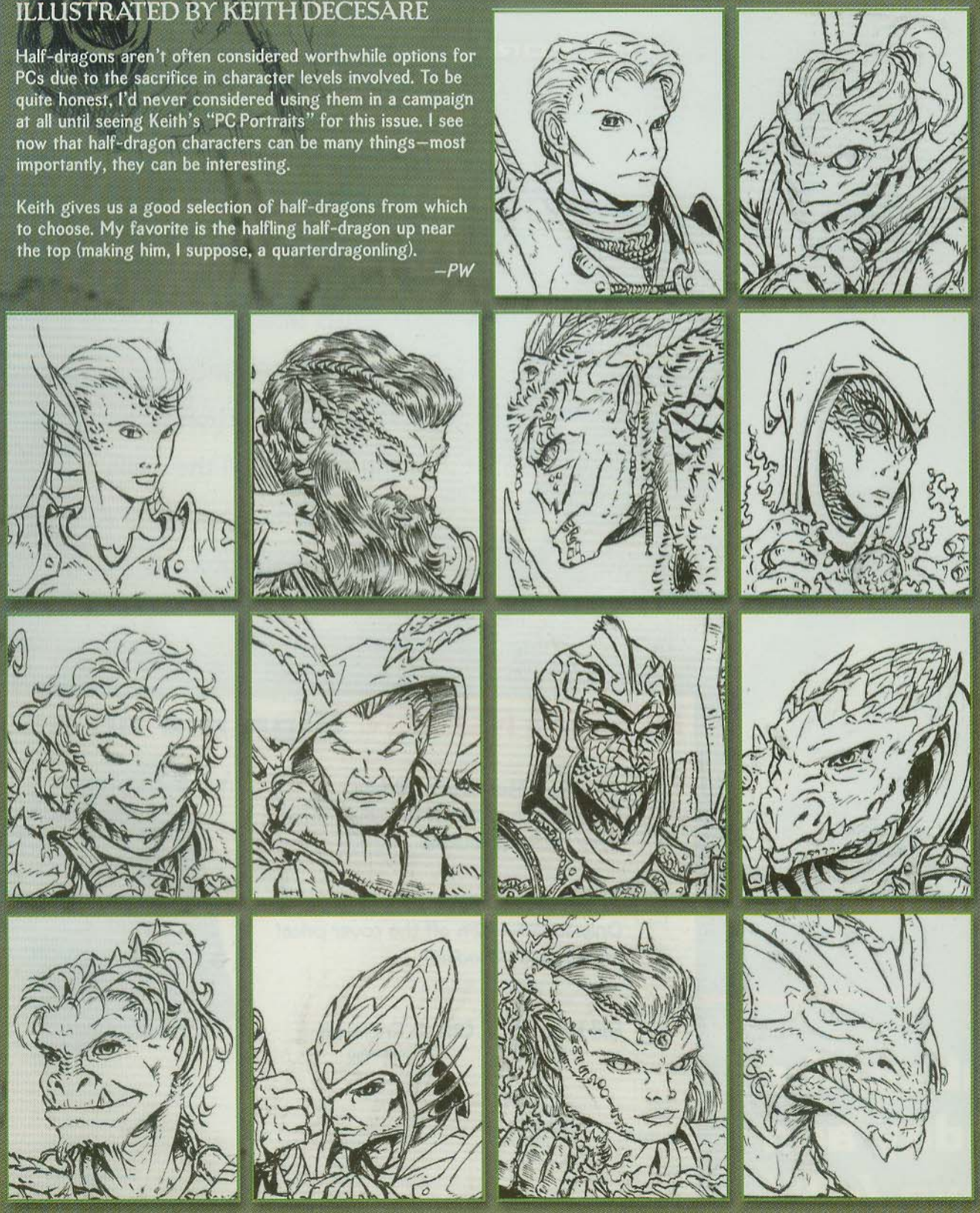
PC PORTRAITS

ILLUSTRATED BY KEITH DECESARE

Half-dragons aren't often considered worthwhile options for PCs due to the sacrifice in character levels involved. To be quite honest, I'd never considered using them in a campaign at all until seeing Keith's "PC Portraits" for this issue. I see now that half-dragon characters can be many things—most importantly, they can be interesting.

Keith gives us a good selection of half-dragons from which to choose. My favorite is the halfling half-dragon up near the top (making him, I suppose, a quarterdragonling).

—PW



DRAGON
BEST PROFESSIONAL GAME MAGAZINE NOMINEE

Cast Your Ballot for the Best Games of 2000!

Vote Online at www.originsawards.com

or request a paper ballot by calling 480.675.0205

THE 27TH ANNUAL

ORIGINS AWARDS

FOR THE BEST GAMES OF 2000

SWEET CALLIOPE

ORIGINS AWARD NOMINEE

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ORIGINS AWARDS CEREMONY
FRIDAY, JULY 6, 2001, 8:00PM
THE ORIGINS INTERNATIONAL GAME EXPO AND FAIR

For the first time since entering the Origins Hall of Fame in 1994, Dragon Magazine is eligible for an Origins award in the Best Professional Game Periodical category, and we couldn't be more proud of the nomination. You can learn more about the Academy of Adventure Game Design and vote for your favorite game products at www.originsawards.com.

THE COVETED CALLIOPE STATUETTE

Origins Awards, Calliope, the Origins Awards logo, and the Calliope statuette are trademarks of GAMA, the Game Manufacturers Association.
©2001 GAMA, the Game Manufacturers Association.

Nominees for the 2000 Origins Awards:

Best Abstract Board Game
Button Lords: Arthurian Buttonmen
Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack
Icehouse: The Martian Chess Set
Reiner Knizia's Through The Desert
Shipwrecked

Best Historical Board Game
Axis & Allies: Europe
For the People II
Pacific Victory
Panzer Grenadier
Silverton: The Game of Colorado Railroading
The Chicago Way

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game
Star Wars: QueenOs Gambit
The Great Brain Robbery
Twilight Imperium 2nd Edition
Wizard Kings

Best Graphic Presentation of a Board Game
For the People II
Rome at War
Shipwrecked
Star Wars: QueenOs Gambit
The Great Brain Robbery
The Hills Rise Wild!
Twilight Imperium 2nd Edition

Best Trading Card Game
Age of Empires Expandable Card Game
Magi-Nation Duel
MLB Showdown
Sailor Moon Collectible Card Game
Wheel of Time CCG

Best Traditional Card Game
Apples to Apples Junior
Chronomuni
Letterhead
The Big Idea

Best Card Game Expansion or Supplement
7th Sea: Black Sails (for 7th Sea)
Apples to Apples Expansion Set-2 (for Apples to Apples)
BRAWL: Club Foglio (for BRAWL)
Doomtown: Eye for an Eye (for Doomtown)
Shadowfist: Throne War (for Shadowfist)

Best Graphic Design of a Card Game
7th Sea: Black Sails (for 7th Sea)
Age of Empires Expandable Card Game
BRAWL: Club Foglio (for BRAWL)
Chronomuni
Sailor Moon Collectible Card Game

Best Game-Related Novel
Clan novel: Gasyanni (for Vampire: the Masquerade)
Dodmar the Dark (for Dragonlance)
Dragons of a Fallen Sun
Necropolis
The Scorpion

Best Game-Related Short Work
Avalon (for King Arthur Pendragon)
How Bashthraka Lost His Spear (for Orkworld)
Matt and Gilly's Big Date
Mormacai's Lament (for Warhammer Fantasy Battle)

Best Historical Miniatures Rules
Battle Front
Civil War PIGS
Fields of Honor
Rage on the Reich

Best Science-Fiction or Fantasy Miniatures Rules
Cry H.A.V.O.C.: Miniature Game Rules 1.0
Fatty Meat
Mage Knight: Rebellion
Star Trek: Red Alert! Customizable Disk Game
Warhammer
When Good Villagers Go Bad

Best Historical Figure Miniatures Series
18mm American Civil War (3d)
Axler 6mm WWII line
Hammers Hellhounds (US Paratroopers)

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Figure Miniature
B.A. Felton: Knights of the Dinner Table Miniature
Beholder (for Dungeons & Dragons)
The Great Dragon T'laukul (for Dark Heaven Apocalypse)
The Orb of Power & Benny the Bouncer (for Carnage)
Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka (for Warhammer 40,000)

Best Vehicular Miniature
CAV Dictator (for CAV: Combat Assault Vehicle)
Hazat Ships: The Red Talon Fleet (for Noble Armada)
Perth Miniatures' WWII 10mm Tiger I (Sdkfz 181) German Tank
Shadowsword Titan Hunter (for Warhammer 40,000)
Valkurie German Walker (for Gear Krieg)

Best Amateur Game Periodical
Alarums & Excursions
DEMONGROUND: Reflections of a Darker Future
Dungeon Crawler Magazine
Serendipity's Circle
The Shadowrun Supplemental (for Shadowrun)

Best Professional Game Periodical
Dark Tower
Dragon
Games Unplugged Magazine
Knights of the Dinner Table Magazine
Pyramid

Best Play-by-Mail Game
Adventurers Guild
Middle-earth Play-By-Mail Fourth Age circa 1000
Starweb

Best Roleplaying Adventure
Another Fine Mess (for FUDGE)
Death in Freeport (for the d20 system)
Shiki: An Epic Adventure Anthology (for Sengoku)
So, We Have... an Obelisk? (for Big Eyes, Small Mouth)
Three Days to Kill (for the d20 system)

Best Roleplaying Game
All Flesh Must Be Eaten RPG
Big Eyes, Small Mouth: Second Edition
DUNE: Chronicles of the Imperium RPG
Dungeons & Dragons
Fudge Expanded Edition
Star Wars Roleplaying Game

Best Roleplaying Supplement
GURPS Steampunk (for GURPS)
Hot Rods and Gun Bunnies (for Big Eyes, Small Mouth)
Lost Worlds: Knights of the Dinner Table
SAXONS: Wolves in the Fold of Arthur's Britain
The Keeper's Companion (for Call of Cthulhu)
Trismere (for Ars Magica)

Best Graphic Design of a Roleplaying Game, Adventure, or Supplement
Big Eyes, Small Mouth: Second Edition
DUNE: Chronicles of the Imperium RPG
Legend of the Five Rings RPG: 2nd Edition Player's Guide
Monster Manual (for Dungeons & Dragons)
Tenchi Muyo! Role-Playing Game and Resource Book

Best Game Aid or Accessory
Army Builder II
Cardboard Heroes Dungeon Floors
Crystal Dice
Fractal Terrains
Master Maze: Cavern Set
The Munchkin's Guide To Powergaming

ROLE MODELS

MONSTERS

by Mike McVey

Over the last few months we've been looking at different aspects of the miniature painting hobby—from what tools and equipment you'll need through to the techniques used to paint faces, or chainmail armor. All of the areas we've addressed be applied to any type of miniature painting. You paint the face in the same way on a Medieval knight as you do on a WWII soldier. This month we're going to look at a subject peculiar to fantasy miniatures—monsters.

Painting the monsters and fabulous beasts of the D&D universe is one of the most appealing parts of the hobby. You can let your imagination—and paint brush—run riot with subjects as diverse as beholders and dragons. The range of painting techniques used is similarly as broad.

What follows is not meant to be an exhaustive guide about how to paint D&D monsters. I just want to give you an overview about some of the problems you might come across and the techniques used to get round them.

Assembly

One of the first problems that you might encounter when painting monsters is that some of the miniatures are large, multi-piece castings that need quite a lot of assembling before you can even start painting. Lets look at an extreme case—a dragon. Large models of this sort take quite a bit of putting together, and it might seem pretty daunting if you've just opened the box and are confronted with a pile of pieces. But if you go about it systematically, you end up with a spectacular miniature.

The first thing to do is to clean all the flash and casting marks from the pieces and check how they fit. Some warping will have occurred in the mold, so you will need to trim and file the components to get a good fit.

One of the biggest problems is the weight of the pieces and how you fasten them together. With large components, the best technique to use is pinning. This is where a small metal pin is inserted between the pieces to strengthen the join. It also has the added advantage of holding the pieces together while the glue dries. I use a small hand-held pin vice (available widely from hobby stores) rather than an electric drill, as they are more controllable. The thing to make sure is that the holes on pieces you are joining line up with each other—try putting a tiny spot of paint on one of the surfaces to be joined and then pressing the other half to it—the paint will mark the other piece. All you need to do then is drill the holes where the paint marks are. I use a short length of wire cut from a straightened paper clip, which will usually fit neatly into a hole from a 1mm drill bit.

The other main issue is what glue to use. In most cases, I would recommend using a good cyanocrylate (super glue). You can get a thicker gel that will fill gaps between larger pieces, and when combined with a pin, cyanocrylate creates a strong bond. Make sure that you rub the surface of each of the pieces to be joined with abrasive paper; this

PREPARATION

A clean workstation is critical to creating a great miniature. Assemble all the tools needed before you begin to avoid distractions.

TRIM FLASH

Cut off any bits of molding debris that may occur with small wire clippers.

PREPARE JOINTS

Use a small drill and glue to reinforce joints at contact spots.

GLUE

Use an abrasive paper to buff areas to be glued together.

BEHOLD YOUR CREATION

Try not to let your awesome miniatures distract you from your roleplaying game.

removes any oxidation and will give a far stronger bond. On really large pieces, you might have to resort to two-part epoxy glue. This creates a strong bond but has to be clamped while the glue dries; rubber bands or even strips of tape are good for this. Again, make sure the surfaces to be joined are properly prepared before they are glued.

Painting

Before you begin painting, take a few minutes to look at the miniature, examine the surface to see how it's been sculpted. Is it covered with scales or tough hide? Look in the *Monster Manual* to see what the description says, and look at any artwork that's there—anything you can use for reference. In short, make a plan for how you're going to tackle the painting; don't just blunder into it. Decide things like what color you want to undercoat the figure; black is good for deeper colors, and you can build the highlights up over it, but white is better for bright colors, and you can wash deeper tones over the surface for the shading.

One of the things that differentiates monsters from other types of miniature is that they usually don't wear clothes. This might sound stupid and obvious, but it makes quite a difference to how you approach the painting. With monsters, it's all about the surface. Different sculpted textures need to be handles in different ways. In many cases, that same texture will cover the whole creature. For example, if you are painting a giant eagle, 95% of the miniature is covered with feathers, so you need to work different colors and patterns into the feathers to create contrast and interest. Any different textures that exist, such as the beak and claws need to be picked out.

Scales

Scales can be handled in a few different ways depending on how big they are. If an area is covered with small scales, they can be treated like a texture and painted accordingly, just as you would with textures such as chainmail or fur. So if you want green scales, paint the area medium green first, then apply a deep green wash to add shading and pick out the details, and finally drybrush with a light green for the highlights. If the scales are larger, they need to be treated with a little more care, with shading and highlighting added to each one. I would still apply a wash over the whole area though as this brings out the individual scales. Just because a creature is completely covered in scales doesn't mean they all need to be painted the same color. For example you could paint the scales on the back blue and the ones down the belly in a more natural bone color. Remember, it's good to add contrast and variation. Try looking in a book on reptiles to see the massive variation that can be found in nature.

Claws and Teeth

This is quite a common factor with monsters; most have one or both. Some people simply paint teeth and claws white, but the effect is too bright and unrealistic. It's far better to use more natural tones. Start with a base coat of a sandy brown and add white for the highlights, if room allows, add some deep brown shading at the base. Tusks and horns can be painted in the same way. Try fading them from mid-brown to almost pure white at the tip. You don't need to just stick to this pattern; larger horns can look great if painted in bolder colors; there is no reason why a red dragon can't have red horns.

Fur and feathers

Feathers are another area that can be treated like a texture. Paint them in a base color, let it dry, then carefully drybrush on the highlights. You need to be careful, since it's easy to fill in the details if you have too much paint on the brush. As mentioned earlier, larger areas can be broken up with different colors or markings. If you are painting a creature with feathered wings, have a look at a book on real birds. Such books really are the best reference.

The weird and the wonderful

The D&D universe is populated with all manner of strange beasts, many of which don't really fit any of the subjects above. You should approach things like elementals, for example, in a totally different way. This is half the fun of miniature painting: coming up with your own solutions to problems. As noted earlier, you can generally find a starting point for most things by taking a look at the picture and description in the *Monster Manual*. This will at least get you started. The rest is up to you!

THE PLAY'S THE THING

by Robin D. Laws • illustrated by John Kovalic

Foiled, No Curses

DM | Okay, so you're the usual random assortment of adventurers who don't know each other, and you all meet up in a bar and get to talking and agree to go off and risk your lives together, so this guy comes up to you and says . . .

YOU | [to your buddy] You ready?

BUDDY | Yep.

YOU | Not so fast, DM. Some of us know each other from way back.

We often give plenty of thought to the PCs we create, but rarely does it occur to us to collaborate with the other players during character creation. Few players go beyond the "I'm playing a fighter, so make sure somebody's a cleric" school of collaboration. But if you do pool your creative resources, you can both create interesting characters and take a greater than usual hand in shaping the campaign's direction.

If your D&D game was a TV show, the creators wouldn't invent each character in isolation. They'd pay attention to the relationships between characters. They'd give some characters pre-existing connections to strengthen the drama of their scenes together. They'd work to create a range of relationships between their cast members, making some friendly and others antagonistic.

When one character's traits are brought out by contrast with a second character, the second character is called a foil for the first. In fiction, the foil character is usually less important than the main character. In a D&D game, all PCs are equally important. That doesn't stop you from collaborating with another player to build in contrasting personality traits, a pre-existing relationship, or both. It just means that each character serves as a foil to the other.

The most entertaining scenes in character-oriented games are those in which PCs interact with one another, often with little intervention from the DM. (The DM is usually content to sit back and enjoy the action, taking a break from her usual duties as mover of the storyline.) These fun moments usually come about by happenstance, but with a little advance preparation you can almost guarantee their arrival.

Pick a player you know well, preferably one who shows up to most sessions. Confer with him ahead of time by phone or email to kick around various ideas for the relationships between your characters. Some of the simplest relationships follow.

Rivals

The most fun and easy relationship to play is that of rivals. The two PCs agree to work together as part of a larger group but take an instant dislike to one another. You won't attack each other or do anything that obviously threatens the interests of the entire party. Within those limits, however, each rival constantly contrives to show his superiority over the other. The subtlety of the rivalry depends on the personalities of the characters involved. Sophisticated noblemen might skewer each other with barbed and witty words. A mischievous gnome might enjoy playing practical jokes on his rival. Hot-tempered half-orcs might incessantly threaten and bait their rivals, stopping just short of violence.

Define what the rivalry between the two characters is all about. In real life, we tend to choose as rivals people we find too similar to ourselves. A fighter might be more threatened by the success of another warrior, who performs essentially the same role in the party as his own. We also tend to clash with others of the same personality type; one know-it-all feels compelled to demonstrate his preeminence over another.

Rivalries also arise when two people pursue the same goal. The two of you might seek the same treasure, the solution to a specific scholarly mystery, or the affections of a particular prince or princess.

When playing rivals, be careful not to let the hard feelings between characters leak into your treatment of the other player. The characters are rivals, but the players are not.

Romantic Partners

Love is one of the primary motivations in all forms of popular entertainment, but it tends to get short shrift in D&D games. This is understandable; it's one thing to watch mushy scenes between an actor and an actress but it's quite another to play them out between friends. It takes skillful roleplayers to pull off a love relationship between PCs that doesn't make the other players squirm. It's even more uncomfortable to watch a real-life couple work out relationship issues in the course of a roleplaying game. But, like we said, it is a major element of the source material, and it could be very rewarding if carried out by extremely sensitive and talented roleplayers.

Perhaps easier to play is unrealized romantic tension, in which the characters are clearly head over heels for one another but refuse to acknowledge, much less act on, their feelings. Mulder and Scully from *The X-Files* provide the classic example here.

It is definitely easier to portray ex-partners turned rivals, as long as you keep it light-hearted and avoid the bitterness that characterizes many real-world relationships.

Philosophical Opposites

Characters in adventure fiction often personify abstract concepts; when paired with their opposites, they serve as foils for one another. Mulder and Scully are also an example of this: the wild-eyed believer versus the diehard rationalist. An even more classic example are *Star Trek*'s Spock and McCoy, who together represent logic versus emotion. In this case, think of an abstract concept you want your character to personify, like justice, order, or gluttony. Then propose to your foil's player that he create a character based on the opposite of that concept: vengeance, anarchy, or austerity.

You could see this as another case of rivalry, but in this instance the characters' entertaining clashes derive from their inherent differences instead of their similar traits or goals. They don't wish each other ill; they just perceive life in incompatible ways.

Ties That Bind

Your PC might enjoy a special bond within the group. The relationship might be that of mentor and student, father and son, or brother and sister. (None of these relationships necessarily guarantees good feelings. You can certainly play any of these pairs as estranged.) Each relationship implies something about the attitudes of each character towards the other: The student will look up to and protect the mentor. The father will take pride in his son, but will expect much of him. Siblings will compete with one another but band together when outsiders threaten.

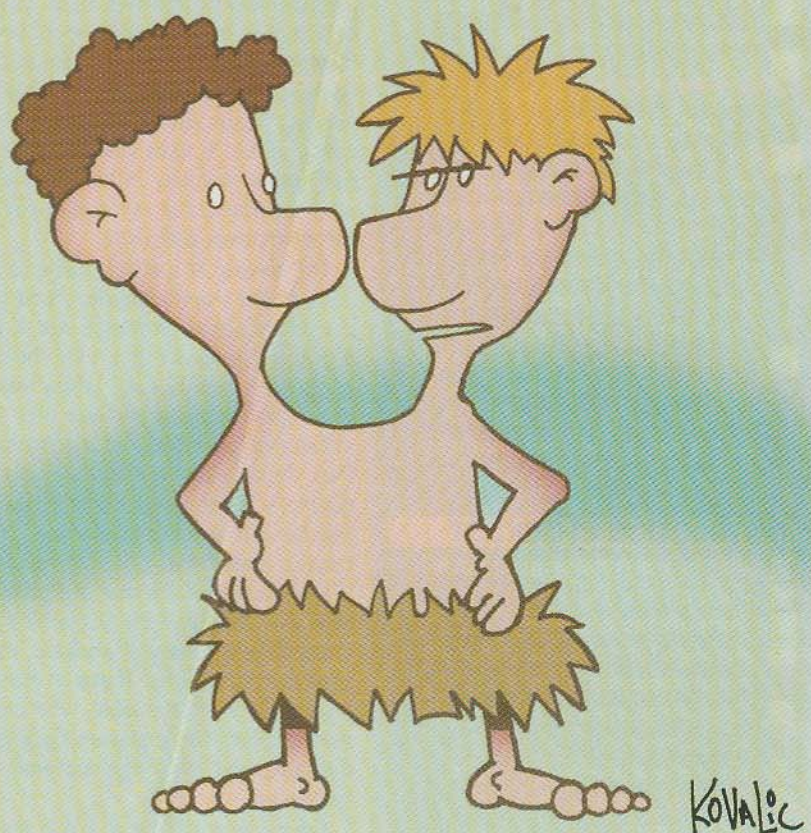
Once you've chosen the type of relationship, decide whether it's pre-existing or if it will develop over time. Family relationships are almost always pre-existing, for example, but perhaps you can plan to reveal in the course of play that your PC is another player's son.

If the two characters have a pre-existing relationship, they share a past history. You must work together to create your shared backstory. You might do this by bouncing a document back and forth (perhaps via email) or just by improvising details as the need for them arises during play.

If the relationship develops over time, the characters will most likely quickly define their attitudes toward one another after they meet.

YOU | Strangers? Why, I'll have you know that Etrisk and I are boon companions, being the lone survivors of the March of Tears!

BUDDY | Jamosh there is a coward and a fool, but let any here question his honor, and I'll spit him like a boar, ready for the roasting fire! D



"OK... IN RETROSPECT MAYBE WE COLLABORATED A LITTLE TOO CLOSELY ON OUR CHARACTERS..."

THE GAME ROOM CHECKLIST

by Johnn Four

Johnn Four is the author of the Roleplaying Tips Weekly E-Zine. Check it out at www.roleplayingtips.com.

Have some tips of your own to suggest? Send them to "DM's Toolbox" at the *DRAGON* address or shoot an email to scalemail@wizards.com.

SEATING STRATEGIES

- ☐ Put players who are known to talk off topic more than the others closer to you so you can help keep them focused.
- ☐ Place loud or vocal players at the far end of the table.
- ☐ Let shy or quiet players sit close to you or between players who can draw them out.
- ☐ Put new players beside you or between veteran players.
- ☐ Put rules lawyers at the far end of table.
- ☐ Do not seat loud players with a wall behind them; that will only make them louder. Instead, put them with their back to the most open area of the room.
- ☐ Put players who get up often in the most accessible spots.
- ☐ If this session focuses on a particular player's character, put that player near you.
- ☐ Put players whose characters are out of commission at the beginning of the session beside you. Then they can help you run NPCs, look up rules, control monsters, and so on, until their character is in play again.
- ☐ Put players who don't know each other very well, or whose characters don't often associate with each other, beside one another.

DISTRACTION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Play in a private or quiet room.
- ☐ Turn off the TV.
- ☐ Turn off the computer.
- ☐ Arrange for someone to handle non-roleplaying visitors.
- ☐ Turn off phones or set ringers to low volume.
- ☐ Mute the answering machine.
- ☐ Turn off and hide the video games.
- ☐ Pre-arrange meals and snacks.
- ☐ Give players a few minutes to socialize before asking them to focus on game play.
- ☐ Clean the table during breaks.

Have you ever thought about using your game room to enhance your sessions? You have a lot of control over things like table and chair arrangements, player seating, and even unwelcome distractions. Beyond these basic ergonomics, you can use light and music to set just the right mood.

Use a Good Table & Chairs

While there are plenty of seating arrangement possibilities, such as sitting on couches in your living room or playing on the floor with cushions, nothing beats a good gaming table for creating focus, concentration, and camaraderie. A table lets everyone face each other and play at the same level. It also provides a flat surface to roll dice, set miniatures, and write.

Try playing at a sturdy table to prevent drinks from being disturbed by an accidental bump. Nothing's worse than a grape 13th-level fighter. On the other hand, even rickety card tables make great gaming tables because they are collapsible, portable, and a good height. Plus, their smaller size creates close quarters. If you use a portable table, just place things like drinks and candles elsewhere.

Use sturdy chairs that are comfortable over long periods but don't make players sleepy. If possible, use chairs without arms. These let players cozy right up to the table, whereas armed chairs force players back from the table, and they might become withdrawn.

Cover your table with battle mats, laminated maps, or a tablecloth to protect the surface. Do this before players arrive and start putting down their books, dice, and papers.

As DM, you should sit at the head of the table, assuming the table isn't round or square. This place lends you subtle authority and helps the players focus on you. Also, you might find this spot gives you more elbowroom. If there's an extra seat, leave the far end empty to avoid isolating a player.

Create Close Quarters

Close quarters can help create a mood of excitement, intensity, and friendship. If players are spread out all over a room, they can become aloof or disengaged. On the other hand, keeping the players close keeps them tuned in, alert, and involved.

Close quarters also help draw out quieter players, who are often content to sit back and watch the game unfold. "Out of sight, out of mind" holds true during roleplaying games, but if a quiet player is elbow-to-elbow with the rest of the players, they won't forget or ignore her. She might even get caught up in the action and participate more.

Large spaces can cause players to raise their voices to be heard or get your attention. A tightly seated group reduces this kind of noise—a boon to both players and nearby non-players.

Be sure to play in a well-ventilated area or in an area where you can open windows or doors. Close quarters can become muggy and stifling , which can make the players groggy. When it's warm, a fan is a great way to keep everyone refreshed and alert.

Player Seating

Choosing a seating arrangement might sound more appropriate for a society dinner than a game session, but it can help your game. Pre-determine the seating arrangements, then either direct players to their seats when they arrive or make name cards (using character names) to show players where to sit.

Prevent Distractions

Distractions can wreck all your efforts to create focus and atmosphere. Fortunately, you can eliminate many potential distractions before the game.

If a player is expecting calls or visitors, make sure he can leave and rejoin the game table easily (and perhaps put him at the far end of the table). The same thing goes with players who need to cook, smoke, use the washroom frequently, and so on.

It might be a good idea to draft a set of house rules concerning this list of distractions and give each player a copy. Ask for their feedback on each item, then produce a final version to which the whole group agrees. That way everyone's expectations on situations like cell phones and out-of-character conversations are clearly and fairly communicated.

Also, empathize with your players' needs. If they really want to socialize, play while cooking burgers for the group, or need to leave their phones on, try to reach solutions that appeal to everyone. For example, if players whose characters are unconscious want to play video games, let them retire to another room to keep from disturbing the others.

DM's Little Helpers

If you have room at your end of the table, keeping a small table, box, or tote container nearby can often be handy if you have a lot of notes and reference materials. You can also set your screen up there if you prefer not to put one up at the main table.

Try to arrange a side room or quiet area for private discussions during play. If you have a lot of secret meetings with your players, seat yourself near that room for easy access.

Invest in some small bookshelves near where you sit so you can access books and binders quickly, yet keep them off the game table.

For maps, group notes, and diagrams, try to arrange something like a dry erase board, corkboard, or paper pad and easel. Put it behind players to get them turning and moving around during sessions so their blood gets flowing and they remain alert.

Set Your Lighting

Lighting can have a huge impact on the atmosphere of your game. Candlelight, for example, creates a very different effect than does a red light bulb. When possible, pick lighting that enhances your stories, sets a mood, pleases your players, and makes play comfortable.

For dramatic effect, you might adjust the lighting several times during a session. Consider using special lighting for a short-term specific effect, such as for strange places or weird encounters. Maybe you'll find a use for that old disco ball mom hides in the basement.

Don't go overboard. Changing the lights too often or using too many lights (especially candles) can heat up a room and interfere with the game. Dim lighting can also make players sleepy. Dim light can make it hard to read a character sheet, and very bright light can give some players a headache.

Play Music in the Background

Background music fills lulls in the talk, enhances the atmosphere, and keeps energy levels up. Music is also a great way to change the mood. For example, release tension by switching to light music after a tense combat or roleplaying encounter.

Try all the options that you can at least once. To get the most from these ideas, keep a DM's journal. For each session, note the game date, ideas you tried, and observations you made about game play and player reactions. The day after, think back on the game and rate each experiment from one to ten. This will help you track and remember what worked best. For example, you might have noticed that a particular CD a player brought raised everyone's energy levels and complemented a combat encounter. Note this so you can arrange to play it during a climactic battle scene in a future session.

As you experiment with various combinations of these ideas, you'll soon learn which ones work best for your group. You'll build the perfect game room in no time.

A final thought: It's helpful to consider your game room as a renewable resource. If you take care of it, the welcome mat will always be laid out. So please enlist your players' help in set-up, breakdown, and cleaning each session.

MUSIC TIPS

- Favor instrumentals over vocals.
- Avoid pop or other music that might break the tone.
- Keep the volume low so everyone can still hear each other.
- Increase the volume during the climax of an adventure to heighten excitement.
- Pre-mix your music, preferably on CD, so you don't have to stop the game to change the tune.
- Movie soundtracks with varying tempos and period music are good.
- Video game soundtracks and electronic music, though repetitious, are good for their upbeat tempos.
- Use specific tracks to highlight special moments in your games, such as the "Throne Room" track from the STAR WARS CD when the characters return victorious from a hard fought mission.
- Use music to create mental "triggers" for the group (play easy listening music during session set-up then switch to indicate the game is starting).
- Designate specific music tracks for your villains to create great anticipation and excitement.

LIGHTING OPTIONS

- Natural light: the sun, moon, dusk, sunset, cloudy day
- Bright, overhead lighting (helps keep everyone alert)
- Candles
- Variable lighting (dimmer switch, low-wattage bulbs)
- Colored light bulbs or shades
- Curtains and blinds (to affect tone, level, and tint of natural light)
- Christmas lights (covered with thin fabric for greater effect)
- Lamps (with interesting shades and patterns for ambient or focused light)
- Strobe or black lights
- Cheap party lights

SAGE ADVICE

Need some help with your game?

by Skip Williams
thesage@wizards.com

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
"Sage Advice," *DRAGON Magazine*
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.; Renton, WA 98055

This month, the Sage considers questions about magic items, spells, and related topics in the D&D game.

Is spell resistance affected by negative levels such as those from an *enervation* spell? For example, if I hit a white dragon with an *enervation* and inflict four negative levels, is the dragon's spell resistance now four points lower?

No, negative levels don't affect a creature's spell resistance; however, an attacker's level check to overcome spell resistance is subject to any negative levels the attacker has accumulated. For example, an 18th-level character with four negative level rolls 1d20+14 to make a level check. Note that even a creature that has spell resistance based on character level still does not suffer a loss of spell resistance from negative levels. For example, drow have spell resistance equal to 11+character level. An 18th-level drow has a spell resistance of 29, even with four negative levels. The drow's spell resistance would decrease only if the drow actually lost a level.

If I get hit by a *fireball* while I'm under the effects of a *mirror image* spell, do all my images disappear? The spell as written in the book seems to imply that they survive, but it would seem to me that any area effect damage should wipe them out.

Area spells don't destroy the figments created by the *mirror image* spell, but targeted spells do. To determine whether a spell is "targeted," look at the information that proceeds each spell description. If there is a Target or Targets entry, the spell is targeted. A spell also is "targeted" if it has an Effect entry and the effect is a ray or something else that requires a melee or ranged attack to strike a foe, such as the missile created by the *Melf's acid arrow* spell or the beam of fire from a *flame blade* spell.

If you cast the *mass heal* spell during combat, can you choose which creatures are affected, or does the spell affect everyone in the area, friend and foe alike?

Look at the summary information at the beginning of the spell. If the spell has a Target or Targets entry, the caster chooses who receives the spell (see page 148 in the *Player's Handbook*).

If the spell has an Effect or Area entry, the caster usually can decide where to place the area or effect, but every subject that is within the selected Area or Effect will be affected, no matter what the caster wants. As noted in the previous answer, there are some Effects, such as rays, that allow the caster to select specific subjects.

In any case, *mass heal* has a Target entry, so the caster can select who is affected (but note that the caster cannot select targets that are more than 30 feet apart).

POWERPLAY

BY BILL W. BALDWIN

A Man, or Woman, for All Seasons

A bard is truly a jack-of-all-trades. By 3rd level, she can substitute for almost any class of character the party lacks. If she learns spells like *cure light wounds* and *protection from chaos/evil/good/law;* feats such as Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, and Skill Focus (Heal); and skills like Heal (cross-class skill), Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device, combined with her *inspire courage* ability, she makes a decent substitute cleric or druid. If she learns spells like *grease, summon monster I,* and *sleep;* feats such as Combat Casting or the various metamagic feats; and skills like Concentration, Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device; she makes a respectable sorcerer or wizard. If she learns spells like *detect secret doors, feather fall,* and *unseen servant;* feats such as Alertness, Skill Focus (Open Lock), and Skill Focus (Search); and skills like Climb, Decipher Script, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock (cross-class skill), Pick Pocket, and Search (cross-class skill), she makes a good rogue. If she dons medium armor and a shield, and learns spells like *magic weapon* and *magic armor;* feats such as Weapon Focus and Toughness; and skills like Bluff (for combat bluffing), Concentration, Jump, and Tumble, she makes an adequate replacement for a barbarian, fighter, monk, paladin, or ranger.

POWERPLAY

BY BILL W. BALDWIN

The Universal Translator

A 1st-level gnome bard with 18 Intelligence and 4 ranks in Speak Language can speak 10 languages (4 for Intelligence, 4 for Speak Language, and 2 for Gnome), plus she can speak to burrowing animals once a day. With 4 ranks in Decipher Script, Sense Motive, Innuendo, and the feat Skill Focus (Decipher Script), she should be able to communicate, one way or another, with just about any intelligent creature encountered.

Do you need to see the target of spells such as *chain lightning*, *fireball*, and *blade barrier*? Could you target people inside a *fog cloud*, *obscuring mist*, or *deeper darkness* area without being able to see them?

If the spell has a Target entry, you must be able to see or touch the subject to use the spell. The *chain lighting* spell has a Target entry, so you must be able to see or touch your target to use the spell. If a spell has an Area or Effect entry (*fireball* has an Area entry, *blade barrier* has an Effect entry) instead of a Target, you don't actually have to see your subjects. You can simply state where the Effect or Area will originate, and any subject you happen to catch within the Effect or Area will be affected by the spell. If you can't see the point where the area or effect will originate, you must specify exactly where that point lies. For example, you can say your *fireball* spell will detonate exactly 30 away from you, at the height of your shoulder. You need an unobstructed line of effect between you and the point of origin you specify (see page 150 in the *Player's Handbook*).

If the spell has an Effect entry and normally requires an attack roll against a specific target, you still can hit an unseen target, provided you have an unobstructed line of effect. To strike the unseen target, use the rules for attacking an invisible target. That is, to have any chance of success, you must select a particular 5-foot-square area to attack. If the area you select does not contain a subject, you miss with the spell. If the area you've selected does contain a subject, you still have a 50% chance to miss the subject. If you beat the miss chance, you can roll a normal attack against the subject and the subject is affected by the spell if you hit. See page 78 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details on the procedures for attacking invisible foes.

On page 149 of the *Player's Handbook*, the diagram and accompanying notes indicates that Mialee can't target creature #1 because she does not have a line of effect. The diagram seems to indicate that Mialee can't target the creature because it's under partial cover (50%, it appears) from a wall. So, does the same apply to, say, a bugbear standing behind a small stalagmite, say up to its knees, for 25% cover?

Cover of less than 100% does not block line effect. Look at the diagram on page 149 again. Creature #1 doesn't have 50% cover from Mialee, it has 100% cover (even though the disk sticks out a little, the creature isn't really that big). Mialee can't cast a spell at the creature, nor can she fire an arrow at it. If Mialee was standing 5 feet to the right, the creature would have only 50% cover, and Mialee could attack with an arrow at a penalty or cast a *magic missile*.

Suppose a character is in the back of a party and decides to target an enemy with a spell. There are several allies and enemies between the spellcaster and the target. Does the caster have a clear line of effect to the target?

Creatures don't block line of effect. They do provide cover, so they can interfere with rays and other spells that require attack rolls.

Can multiclass spellcasters combine their levels to satisfy the level prerequisites for item creation feats? For example, the Forge Ring feat requires a spellcaster of level 12+. If I am a 6th-level cleric/6th-level wizard do I qualify, or would I need to be 12th level in one or the other?

You need to have the listed number of levels in a single spellcasting class. In the case of Forge Ring, you need twelve levels in a spellcasting class. Note that if you have a prestige class that improves the spellcasting ability of another class, you use your effective caster level to meet the prerequisite. For example, a 10th-level wizard/2nd-level loremaster is a 12th-level spellcaster and meets the prerequisite for Forge Ring.

The description for the Enlarge Spell feat says an enlarged spell has its range doubled. The description also says that a spell whose area or effect is determined by its range (such as *bless* or a cone spell) has the dimensions of its area or effect increased proportionally. The *lightning bolt* spell has a range of 100 feet + 10 feet per caster level if it is 5 feet wide. If the area is 10 feet wide, the range is 50 feet + 5 feet per level. If a 6th-level wizard throws an enlarged *lightning bolt* that is 10 feet wide, is the bolt produced 10 feet wide by 160 feet long or 20 feet wide by 160 ft long? What happens when you use Empower Spell feat on a *lightning bolt?* Empower Spell increases all variables by one-half. So how wide and long is an empowered *lightning bolt?*

The width the caster chooses determines a *lightning bolt's* range. If the *lightning bolt* is enlarged, it has double the range, but the width remains unchanged. So, if a 7th-level wizard casts a enlarged *lighting bolt* that is 10 feet wide, the lightning bolt's range would be 170 feet (5 feet × 7 = 35 feet + 50 feet base range = 85 feet, doubled to 170 feet). If the same caster chose a 5-foot bolt, its range would be 340 feet. Note that a 6th-level wizard could not cast an enlarged *lighting bolt*, because doing so would require a 7th-level spell slot and a 6th-level wizard doesn't have one of those.

The Empower Spell feat affects only randomly variable aspects of a spell (see the second to the last line of the feat description). A *lightning bolt's* range is configurable but not "variable" for purposes of Empower Spell. A lightning bolt's damage is "variable," and an empowered *lightning bolt* inflicts 1.5 times damage (apply the multiplier before rolling saving throws).

POWERPLAY

BY BILL W. BALDWIN

They Call Me Thordan the Giant Slayer

A 3rd-level dwarf ranger with 18 Strength, the Dodge and Mobility feats, and giants as his favored enemy makes an excellent ogre slayer. He can use a longspear to counteract the ogre's natural reach, getting an attack at +7 (+3 base, +4 Strength) and damage at +7 (+4 Strength, +1.5 multiplier for two-handed weapon, +1 favored enemy). He can also close with the ogre, receiving a +9 to his AC (+4 racial bonus, +4 Mobility and +1 Dodge) against the ogre's attack of opportunity. His dwarven bonus to Constitution should give him enough hit points to survive a couple of lucky blows. If he has an Intelligence of 12 or more, adding Giant as a language might also prove useful. When he reaches 6th level and adds the Power Attack feat, he's ready to take on tougher giants. With a full attack, he can choose to have attack bonuses of +10/+5 and deal +4 damage (Strength), or he can attack with +4/-1 modifiers and deal +10 damage (+4 Strength, +6 Power Attack), or anything in between.

The description for the *desecrate* spell says all Charisma checks made to turn undead within the spell's area suffer a -3 profane penalty. Does this penalty apply to the turning damage roll (2d6 + level + Charisma modifier) or just the turning check roll?

Just the turning check. A turning damage roll is subject to Charisma modifiers, but it is not a Charisma check. The turning check itself, however, is a Charisma check, and it is subject to the penalty.

Can a spellcaster use a *shocking grasp* spell on a metal object the character is holding when casting the spell? For example, could the spellcaster cast *shocking grasp* with a sword (metal) in hand, then strike, dealing sword and spell damage at the same time?

No, if the caster touches an object, she'll discharge the spell into that object and waste the spell. Objects the caster has in hand already aren't electrified, so the caster has to touch a creature or object herself to discharge the spell.

Does magic armor reduce the chance for spell failure? Does it weigh the same as non-magic armor? Does it encumber as much?

Being magic doesn't reduce armor's arcane spell failure chance, weight, or encumbrance. Note, however, that magic armor is masterwork, which reduces the armor's check penalty by 1; see page 113 in the *Player's Handbook*.

The descriptions for spells such as *summon monster* or *summon nature's ally* say the summoned creature disappears at the end of the spell's duration. What if a druid cast *summon nature's ally* then cast *animal friendship* on the summoned creature and befriended it? It would still disappear, but would it attempt to find the druid? Is there an unstated range from which the spell draws the creature?

Summoned creatures aren't really present, they dissolve at their original location, appear where summoned, then reform at their original location after the spell ends (see page 157 in the *Player's Handbook*). If slain while summoned, it takes them a day to reform. In any case, they suffer no lasting effects (for good or for ill) from any summoning episode. If a character uses a *summon nature's ally* spell to summon an animal, the caster could indeed cast an *animal friendship* spell on it. When the *summon nature's ally* spell ends, however, the animal is gone, and it is no longer affected by the *animal friendship* spell. The animal's Hit Dice also no longer count against the limited number of Hit Dice the caster can affect through animal friendship.

What happens when a character targets a *polymorphed* creature with scrying? Suppose someone kills someone else and assumes the victim's form with a *polymorph self* spell. A character then uses scrying to find the victim. Does the scrying show an image of the victim (unknown to the scrier that it is really an impostor), or does it come up with nothing? What if that same person scried for the impostor? Would it show the imposter in his assumed form?

Being *polymorphed* doesn't change your identity—you're still you. Scrying effects tuned to your own identity can still locate you. They can also locate you when they're keyed to an assumed identity, too, depending on the scrying character's knowledge of you.

In the example situation, a scrying attempt directed at finding the impostor in his true identity will reveal the imposter in his assumed form. Someone scrying for the victim would locate the victim's dead body. Someone who knows the imposter only in his assumed identity can scry for him and locate him in that identity.

Note that the difficulty of a scrying check depends on how well the scrying character knows the subject. If you know the subject only in an assumed identity you can claim first-hand knowledge of the subject at best, so your scrying check will have a DC of at least 10 (see page 247 in the *Player's Handbook*).

Can someone using a *discern location* spell find someone using a *mindblank* spell?

No. While the *discern location* spell description contains some pretty strong language about the spell's ability to overcome effects that block scrying divinations, the general rule in the D&D game favors defense over offense, so *mind blank's* ability to block scrying and all forms of divination trumps *discern location's* ability to penetrate such defenses. Blocking spells of 7th level or less, however, are still ineffective against *discern location*.

If a cleric casts *spell immunity* and chooses, say, *fireball*, would the spell stop a heightened *fireball*? Or a *fireball* that has been subjected to another metamagic feat?

Yes, a *fireball* that has been modified by metamagic is still a *fireball*. The modified *fireball* can also be counterspelled by a normal *fireball*.

If a character fails her saving throw against a *disintegrate* spell, are all her items disintegrated with her?

No. When a character fails a saving throw against a spell or other magical attack, all her items survive unless the spell or attack description says otherwise or the character rolls a natural 1 on the save. If the character rolled a natural 1 on the save, one item the character wore or carried is affected by the spell or attack (see Table 10–1 in the *Player's Handbook* and the accompanying text for details). The exposed item must make its own saving throw against the spell or attack.

Does the armor bonus provided by the *mage armor* spell or *bracers of armor* stack with non-magic armor? Would they stack with each other? Would they stack with magic armor? Would it stack with a magic or nonmagic shield? Why or why not? In the previous edition of the game, the *mage armor* spell description specifically said the spell didn't stack with armor or other defensive spells. Why doesn't the current version of the spell state so?

Because it doesn't have to. A *mage armor* spell provides an armor bonus, as do *bracers of armor*. Two armor bonuses do not stack, so a *mage armor* spell does not stack with *bracers of armor*. Nor will a *mage armor* spell or *bracers of armor* stack with a shield, which also provides an armor bonus. Note that the armor bonus from a shield stacks with the armor bonus from a suit of armor you wear, but that's a special property of shields and an exception to the stacking rule. Neither the *mage armor* spell nor *bracers of armor* are suits of armor, so the armor bonus from a shield does not stack with either of them.

How many characters can fit inside the barrier generated by a *cube of force*? Is the barrier centered on the character who activated the *cube*, or does the *cube* user just have to be somewhere inside the barrier?

The barrier is a 10-foot cube, so four Medium-size or Small characters can fit inside in most circumstances. Each such character takes up a space five feet square, at least when they are moving or fighting (see Table 8–7 in the *Player's Handbook*).

If you're not using a grid and miniature figures, the *cube of force* user is at the center of the effect, and the user's allies simply crowd around. If you are using a grid an miniature figures, the effect is 2 squares long and 2 squares wide, and the center is any corner of the square where the cube of force user stands (the cube user picks the corner).

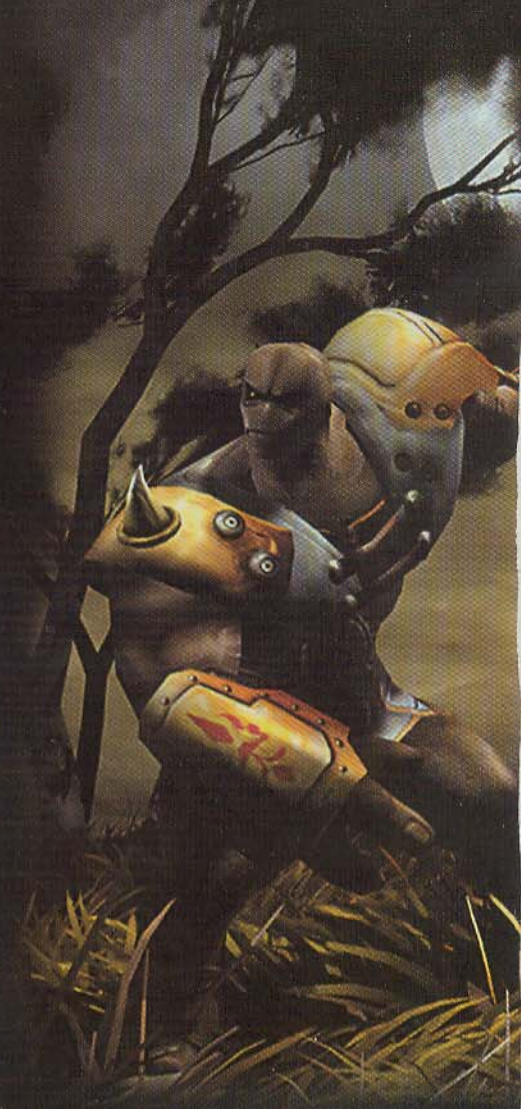
The description for *dust of appearance* says when you throw a handful of the dust into the air, you coat nearby objects and creatures with the dust, just like a *glitterdust* spell (a 10-foot spread). Does *dust of disappearance* work the same way?

No. One application of *dust of disappearance* coats one Small or Medium-size creature. One application can cover 2 Tiny, 4 Diminutive, or 8 Fine creatures. It takes 2 applications of *dust of disappearance* to cover a Large creature, 4 applications to cover a Huge creature, 8 applications to cover a Gargantuan creature, and 16 applications to cover a Colossal creature. D

DRAGON COMICS IN THEIR OWN COMIC BOOKS!
DORK TOWER #13
It's valentine's day in Mud Bay, and the Perky Goths are on the ascendent! But can Matt meet the Goth of his dreams? And what's his ex-girlfriend doing in town? Starring Gilly, the Perky Goth.
Plus: CLANBOOK: PERKY, a VERY unofficial supplement to Vampire: The Masquerade, by Phil Masters! And as usual, there's Murphy's Rules, Wild Life, and a ton of other cool backups! Coming in January!
DORK TOWER
LOVE IS ALL AROUND
NODWICK #7
Our heroes venture into a forboding tower to retrieve an ancient artifact of unimaginable power... I think. What good is a magical pillow? Why does Nodwick start dreaming about faries? What does this have to do with a long-vanished evil God who is destined to destroy the world? Find out in this special 30-page story!
Nodwick
www.dorkstorm.com
Pick up a Dork Storm comic book every month!
MAKE SURE THAT YOUR GAME OR COMIC RETAILER CARRIES YOUR FAVORITE TITLES FROM DORK STORM PRESS!

A Look at Asheron's Call

by Rick Moscatello



This month we visit Asheron's Call, *a popular online roleplaying game. In this game, heroes swarm over the lands of Dereth, slaughtering endless hordes of monsters that magically respawn every 15 minutes. While most of the ideas of an online world don't translate well to the table top, here are a few you might use to help your* Asheron's Call*-playing buddies feel more at home in your campaign:*

THE LIFESTONE *

Each hero of *Asheron's Call* is attuned to a major artifact called a lifestone. Should she die, the lifestone draws her back to life, bringing her body and most of her equipment back to the stone, no matter where or in what circumstances she was defeated, although she is temporarily weaker from the experience. Lifestones cannot be moved, but they occasionally leave Dereth of their own accord and travel to other worlds. They return to Dereth after a short time, but the disappearance of one causes considerable havoc.

This guy is hoping the lifestone he attuned to hasn't moved.

In game terms, a lifestone can make an attuned creature effectively immortal, at least for a little while. To attune to a lifestone, a creature need only come within 5 feet of it and meditate for 1 round; to properly meditate, a creature must have an Intelligence of at least 3 and must be a living creature. A creature must attune every 24 hours, or the benefits of the lifestone are lost (natives of Dereth stay permanently attuned).

If an attuned creature is slain, the body vanishes and the creature is returned to life at the foot of the lifestone after a 1d4 rounds as though *true resurrection* had been cast. Creatures returned to life are given 1 negative level; this negative level cannot be removed by any means short of time, and it disappears after an hour. If a creature is killed multiple times over the course of an hour, the negative levels are cumulative. The creature's most valuable possession (in terms of market value) is left wherever he died, but the rest of his equipment returns with him to the lifestone. Any spells active at the time of his death are cancelled, but prepared spells are not lost when a character dies while attuned. If a creature has more negative levels than its Hit Dice, it dies permanently.

Lifestones magically teleport to Dereth after 1d20 days. When this happens, all creatures attuned to it lose their attunement.

The inclusion of a lifestone in a campaign should be a special event; here are a few adventures to mark the occasion:

- A powerful monster has been fearlessly rampaging around the countryside, seemingly unstoppable. The adventures are hired to kill it. They do so and collect the reward, only to face an irate village the next day when the creature returns. Eventually they find its lair and discover the secret of its courage and resilience: a lifestone. Once the monster is defeated, the party can enjoy the lifestone's protection for at least a few days.
- A church hires the party to go on an amazingly dangerous quest, one that must be completed in a relatively brief amount of time. Normally the quest would be considered too dangerous to even try, but the church has gained use of a lifestone, as well as the means to quickly send the party from the lifestone to the quest location. D

*This item is not balanced for your protection. Use this item in your game only if you want that computer game respawn feel.

Slay all you want—we'll respawn more.

Characters in *Asheron's Call* have the remarkable ability to change equipment in the midst of combat without making themselves vulnerable for more than a moment.

FAST ARMOR

You get in and out of armor with amazing grace and alacrity.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+.

Benefit: A character with this feat can don or remove any sort of armor in 5 rounds, and neither requires assistance nor gains any benefit if another character assists her. A character using the Fast Armor feat cannot "don hastily"—she's already donning it plenty fast!

It looks like none of these guys have the Fast Armor feat.

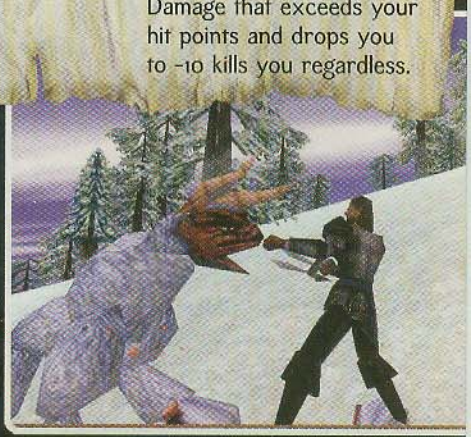
Even relatively "weak" monsters in Dereth can cast spells that do horrifying amounts of damage, with 50 or more points being not uncommon. Nonetheless, heroes of Dereth never seem to be fazed by the destruction, falling only when their hit points drop to zero.

STOIC COMPOSURE

You can stoically sustain huge amounts of damage and persevere despite terrible wounds.

Prerequisite: Con 13+, Endurance, Toughness

Benefit: You automatically make your save when subjected to massive damage (as per the rules on page 129 of the *Player's Handbook*). Additionally, if you are brought to negative hit points, you have a 50% chance to stabilize at the end of each round. Damage that exceeds your hit points and drops you to -10 kills you regardless.



This fellow might find Stoic Composure useful.

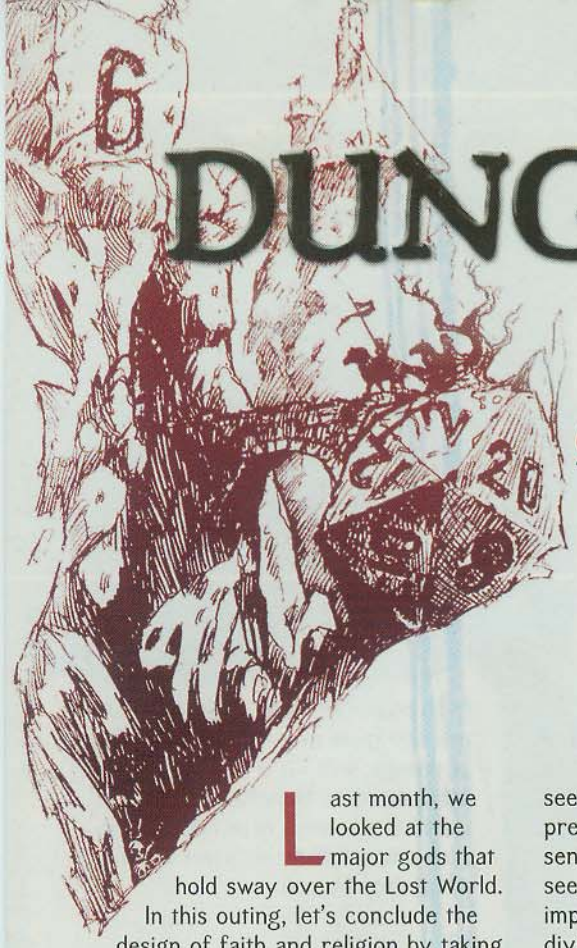
Some of the more agile heroes of Dereth have mastered a technique for dealing with the more dangerous spell-casting monsters. These heroes can time the casting of their enemies, allowing them to jump out of the way at the very last moment, even when in melee.

COMBAT AGILITY

You have a knack for dodging non-melee attacks made by adjacent foes.

Prerequisite: Dodge, Lightning Reflexes

Benefit: Whenever an opponent within 5 feet makes an attack, casts a spell, or uses an ability that requires you to make a Reflex save (such as a breath weapon or *lightning bolt* spell), you gain a +4 competence bonus to your Reflex save. If an adjacent opponent within 5 feet of you tries to hit you with a ranged attack or ranged touch attack, you gain a +4 dodge bonus to your AC. Regular touch attacks are not affected by this feat, and you must be able to see your foe for the feat to be effective.



DUNGEONCRAFT

GOTTA HAVE FAITH: PART II

by Ray Winninger

Send email to: scalemail@wizards.com
"Dungeoncraft" c/o *Dragon Magazine*
1801 Lind Ave. SW • Renton, WA 98055

For past installments of "Dungeoncraft," go to http://www.wizards.com/dragon

Last month, we looked at the major gods that hold sway over the Lost World. In this outing, let's conclude the design of faith and religion by taking a long look at those who worship the gods. Along the way, we'll consider some tips for customizing the D&D game rules to accentuate the unique flavor of the campaign.

Note that we're employing a five-step process for designing gods and faiths originally detailed way back in *Dragon* #258. You can find this piece in the "Dungeoncraft" archives at www.wizards.com/dragon.

Last issue, we completed steps one and two of the process, which leads us next to . . .

IF THE HUMANS AND OTHER INTELLIGENT RACES DON'T HONOR THE GODS, IT'S DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE CLERICS AND PALADINS, AND THE WHOLE GAME CHANGES RADICALLY.

Step Three: Faith and Worshippers

Most of the active gods in the campaign are essentially the oldest and largest dinosaurs on the planet. They earned their divine aspects by surviving the travails of the Lost World for ages, and this process has somehow translated into a mystical aura that surrounds them. The gods are rarely seen, but when they appear their presence inspires an overpowering sense of awe, and the planet itself seems to tremble in their shadows. It's important to note that, unlike the divine beings of the typical D&D world, these gods don't dwell in an extra-dimensional palace on another plane. They live right on the Lost World with everyone else, although they confine their wanderings to secret glens and grottos known only to their followers.

Although the dinosaur gods aren't overtly sentient, they do possess an undeniable intelligence and personality. They are clearly capable of communicating with their own kind using some sort of unspoken language, and the few humans who have managed to interact with the gods have been left with an impression of great wisdom. We've already decided that one of the gods, Kor the tyrannosaur, is somehow involved in a mysterious plot that threatens the whole of the Lost World (see *Dragon* #283).

Now that we know something about the gods, the next task is to decide how the other inhabitants of the Lost World pay homage to them. One possibility is that the humans and other civilized residents of the planet *don't* worship the gods. Perhaps only the other dinosaurs recognize their sovereignty. Although this is an interesting idea, it's pretty easy to reject. After all, faith and religion are important parts of the D&D game. If the humans and other intelligent races don't honor the gods, it's difficult to imagine clerics and paladins, and the whole game changes radically. While it's certainly possible to run a campaign like this, it's not what we have in mind for the Lost World. We aim to create a game world with a distinctive "feel," but one built on familiar D&D concepts.

Somehow, then, the civilized inhabitants must pay their respects to the dinosaur gods. This presents a slightly sticky situation, since few of the traditional reasons why a culture worships its deities are applicable to these gods. Typically, one might pray to the god of the skies for good weather before setting out to sea, or pray to the goddess of bounty to guarantee a good harvest. It's pretty clear, though, that these dinosaur gods don't have this sort of direct control over the environment. Other than not eating him, it's hard to say exactly how one of these gods might reward a loyal follower.

Our best bet is to take advantage of this mystery. Perhaps no one knows why certain members of the civilized communities of the Lost World swear their allegiance to the dinosaur gods—

not even the faithful themselves. Let's suppose that each of the gods has a cult of priests. Each cult serves as a network of guardians and agents that looks out for the god's interests and carries out subtle instructions the god somehow communicates to them through instinct and intuition. Oddly, the priests cannot explain exactly why they serve—it's simply a compulsion that has been with them for as long as they can remember. Shortly after birth, the priests-to-be receive a telepathic calling from the god and feel the mysterious compulsion to serve. This isn't to imply that the priests are mind-controlled by their lords, simply that they are guided through instinct and emotion; each priest maintains freewill and is theoretically capable of turning his back on his patron, though few have done so. No one understands the mechanics of how the gods select their followers. Heredity is certainly not a factor (for example, the son of a priest has no better or worse chance of becoming a priest than anyone else), and geographical location seems equally meaningless. It's clear that some receive the call to serve even though their gods have never passed within hundreds of miles of their birthplaces.

These priests are the clerics of the Lost World. In addition to spiritual guidance, the gods also bestow powers upon them in the form of divine spells. Partially because of these powers, the priests are natural leaders in their communities. They are often able to assemble their own flocks of followers to help them do their master's bidding. This means that all the inhabitants of the Lost World are generally aware of the various priesthoods, and it guarantees that the dinosaur priests function almost exactly like the clerics who inhabit the traditional D&D game world.

Note that by keeping the true nature of the telepathic bond between the priests and their sovereigns somewhat secretive, we're hoping to lend the dinosaur gods an air of divine mystery. Clearly, these beings possess some strange power that is beyond the comprehension of most mere mortals. One day, we'll have an opportunity to develop this secret further, perhaps giving the players an interesting revelation or two to uncover (don't forget the Second Rule of Dungeoncraft).

When we finally do delve into this mystery, it might be an opportunity to develop the exact mechanics by which the Lost World chooses its dinosaur gods and bestows their strange powers upon them. Fortunately, such matters are best left for later in the campaign, after the players have a few experience levels under the belts, so we needn't worry about providing any of this detail just yet.

NAME	ALIGNMENT	DOMAINS
Kor	Lawful evil	Evil, Death, Destruction
Abrexis	Lawful good	Good, Air, Knowledge
Kalaar	Neutral good	Plant, Protection
Haali	Chaotic neutral	Strength, Water

So far so good, but we still have to answer one obvious question—exactly what sort of services do the priests perform for the dinosaur gods? First and foremost, the priests protect their lords and act as their eyes and ears. Suppose some formidable hero decides to make a name for himself by launching a quest to find and kill Kor. In that case, the tyrannosaur god would immediately mobilize his network of priests who would in turn mobilize their networks of followers to dispatch the hero long before he even comes close to attaining his goal. Likewise, if a band of nomads builds a fortress in a dense forest that disrupts the feeding patterns of the large dinosaurs that live there, Kalaar (the ultrasaurus) might see the move as a threat to her "children" and mobilize her priests to drive away the invaders.

Beyond protection and intelligence gathering, the duties and activities of each priesthood depend upon the nature of the god in question.

Kor (Tyrranosaur): As we decided in the last installment, Kor and his followers have absorbed the essence of the great god of darkness. As a consequence, Kor is essentially dedicated to eradicating the humans, elves, and dwarves who reside on the Lost World. In accord with his wishes, the priesthood of Kor is constantly hatching plots designed to slowly chip away at the power amassed by the civilized societies. Ultimately, all of these efforts are part of a coordinated plan of attack masterminded by Kor himself.

Obviously, all of Kor's priests are evil, and most are lizardfolk. There are, however, a few renegade humans among the faithful who act as spies and operate secret cults inside the Lost World's civilized societies.

Abrexis (Pterosaur): As a creature of the air, Abrexis values freedom above all else. Because he understands that freedom goes hand-in-hand with peace, his priesthood is dedicated to ending conflict and promoting harmony. In essence, Abrexis abhors the savagery of the Lost World and uses his priesthood to help the planet evolve beyond its harsh realities.

Clearly, this mission often brings Abrexis's priests into conflict with the priests of Kor. In fact, the two sects are sworn enemies.

PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF THESE POWERS, THE PRIESTS ARE NATURAL LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Kalaar (Ultrasaur): Kalaar and her "children" (the various brachiosaurs, apatosaurs, and other large plant-eating dinosaurs of the Lost World) are especially dependent upon the planet's forests for survival. As a result, she and her priesthood are dedicated to safeguarding the planet's wilderness and helping the great herds of herbivorous dinosaurs migrate across the planet's surface to avoid the elements and large concentrations of predators.

In many ways, Kalaar is a balancing force between Abrexis and Kor. Although she too appreciates the value of peace, she believes that the ever-expanding civilizations erected by the humans, elves, and dwarves might one day pose a threat to purity of the wilderness and the well-being of her children.

CUTTING AND MODIFYING SPELLS

Spells that should be modified or eliminated on the Lost World include:

0-level

Create water
(eliminate this spell because it doesn't fit our conception of the gods, and it can't be this easy to get fresh water on the harsh Lost World)

Purify food and drink
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *create water*)

1st level

Bless/curse water
(eliminate these because "holy water" doesn't fit with our dinosaur gods)

Detect undead
(modify to *detect dinosaur;* instead of detecting undead, this spell detects dinosaurs of the sort the cleric can turn)

Summon monster I
(modify to *summon dinosaur I;* this spell summons appropriate dinosaurs based on the priest's deity)

2nd level

Consecrate/desecrate
(eliminate these spells because our clerics aren't particularly good at dealing with undead)

Summon monster II
(modify to *summon dinosaur II*)

3rd level

Searing light
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as eliminating *consecrate/desecrate*)

Summon monster III
(modify to *summon dinosaur III*)

4th level

Dimensional anchor
(eliminate this spell because the dinosaur gods have no extra-dimensional power or presence)

Dismissal
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Lesser planar ally
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Summon monster IV
(modify to *summon dinosaur IV*)

5th level

Ethereal jaunt
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Plane shift
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Summon monster V
(modify to *summon dinosaur V*)

6th level

Banishment
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Create undead
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *consecrate*)

Etherealness
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Planar ally
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Summon monster VI
(modify to *summon dinosaur VI*)

7th level

Summon monster VII
(modify to *summon dinosaur VII*)

8th level

Create greater undead
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *consecrate*)

Summon monster VIII
(modify to *summon dinosaur VIII*)

9th level

Gate
(eliminate this spell for the same reasons as *dimensional anchor*)

Summon monster IX
(modify to *summon dinosaur IX*)

Haali (Plesiosaur): Haali is a vain god who is chiefly concerned with protecting his domain, the world's oceans, from encroachment. Although the seas of the Lost World are too big for Haali and his followers to patrol with complete efficiency, Haali is attempting to ensure that no one can cross the oceans without his permission. His priesthood is dedicating to making sure that fishermen and others who travel by sea pay their god his proper respects. Although the priests of all four gods occasionally organize rituals and festivals to honor their lords, Haali is far more interested in these activities than any of the others.

Clerics

What we've created so far should work quite nicely and provide the Lost World with plenty of pizzazz. Unfortunately, the cleric character class as described in the *Player's Handbook* doesn't quite sound like the dinosaur priests I've just described. The typical D&D cleric has certain abilities (such as turning undead), that don't logically stem from the dinosaur gods, while our dinosaur priests should clearly possess certain powers not germane to the cleric class. (Shouldn't a priest of Kor receive some sort of protection against tyrannosaurs?) Once you start creating more ambitious and distinctive faiths, it's fairly easy to run into this problem. Fortunately, it's not too difficult to modify the standard D&D character classes to bring them in line with your vision. In fact, this can be a powerful means of lending your campaign its own distinctive flavor.

Just because such measures can be effective, though, doesn't mean they should be undertaken lightly. You should realize that the D&D rules are carefully balanced and sometimes fit together in ways that aren't obvious. Too much tampering with the rules can result in an unbalanced game that is no longer fun. Think about what might happen, for instance, if you gave your clerics a new power that turns out to be a lot more useful than you thought it would be. Suddenly, your modified cleric class is more powerful than the other classes, and you might end up with a campaign in which the clerics hog all the attention. Before long, you might even discover that nobody is

interested in playing anything else.

Performing major surgery on a class, therefore, is a task best left to more experienced DMs who will do a better job of predicting the impact their changes might have on the campaign. Fortunately, there's a simple strategy for "tweaking" a class that doesn't run too much risk. The basic philosophy is not to add or subtract any abilities to the class but to replace a few key abilities with nearly exact equivalents. Let's look at a few of the cleric's abilities and think about how we might apply such a philosophy.

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY IS NOT TO ADD OR SUBTRACT ANY ABILITIES TO THE CLASS BUT TO REPLACE A FEW KEY ABILITIES WITH NEARLY EXACT EQUIVALENTS.

Skills: Sometimes the cleric's listed class skills don't adequately reflect your campaign. On the Lost World, for instance, dinosaurs serve as mounts and beasts of burden. Since the priests of the Lost World all have a special connection with dinosaurs, shouldn't Animal Empathy be a class skill available to them? After all, it's hard to imagine any resident of the Lost World handling a dinosaur better than a priest.

Again, the basic philosophy is not to add or subtract any abilities but to replace a few key abilities with near exact equivalents. Thus, if we replace a few of the cleric's class skills with completely different skills, we shouldn't run too great a risk of unbalancing the class. For example, Animal Empathy is normally not a class skill for clerics. We can give our clerics Animal Empathy as a class skill, though, so long as we're willing to give up one of the cleric's existing class skills and make it unavailable to the class altogether. In this case, Scry might be a good skill to forfeit.

Turning Undead: Given what we know about the dinosaur gods, it does not necessarily follow that the clerics of the Lost World have any special powers over undead. On the other hand, our clerics do have a special relationship with certain types of dinosaurs that is clearly not reflected by any of the standard cleric's abilities. Thus, let's eliminate the cleric's ability to turn undead and replace it with the ability to "turn" dinosaurs. A priest of Abrexis has the ability to dismiss (or turn) flying dinosaurs, making them leave the area. This ability requires a standard turning check and has the exact same effects as the the standard turn undead ability. Similarly, priests of Kor can turn tyrannosaurs and similar predatory dinosaurs, priests of Kalaar can turn large herbivorous dinosaurs, and priests of Haali can turn aquatic dinosaurs. Again, we're not adding or subtracting abilities, merely replacing some abilities with nearly identical equivalents.

Spells: Some of the cleric spells listed in the *Player's Handbook* look like they'll fit well with our conception of the dinosaur priests, while others look wholly inappropriate. This is another good opportunity to customize the class to give it some unique flavor. Once again, the easiest way to do this is to apply our general philosophy of replacing abilities with near exact equivalents. In this case, we have two options:

- First, we can replace some key spells with spells of an identical level drawn from the lists of wizard spells.
- In addition or instead, we can replace the specifics of a spell with a near equivalent.

See the sidebars for specific notes on these two processes.

Step Four and Five: Two Myths and Other Faiths

Fortunately, both of these stages are already complete. The last installment laid down the framework for the dinosaur gods, creating myths that account for the creation of the Lost World and the "deaths" of the elder gods. As for other faiths, the elder gods aren't really dead, leaving open the possibility that a few of the Lost World's inhabitants still worship these older deities directly. D

REPLACING SPELLS

After cutting the inappropriate spells from the list, it's time to select suitable replacements. Note that, when replacing a domain spell, you should assume that the replacement spell substitutes for the original spell on the domain list unless there is a compelling reason why it shouldn't. If there is such a reason, select a new entry to replace the spell on the domain list.

Also note that when selecting replacement spells, you should make sure you don't pick a spell that's already available to the cleric class at a different level.

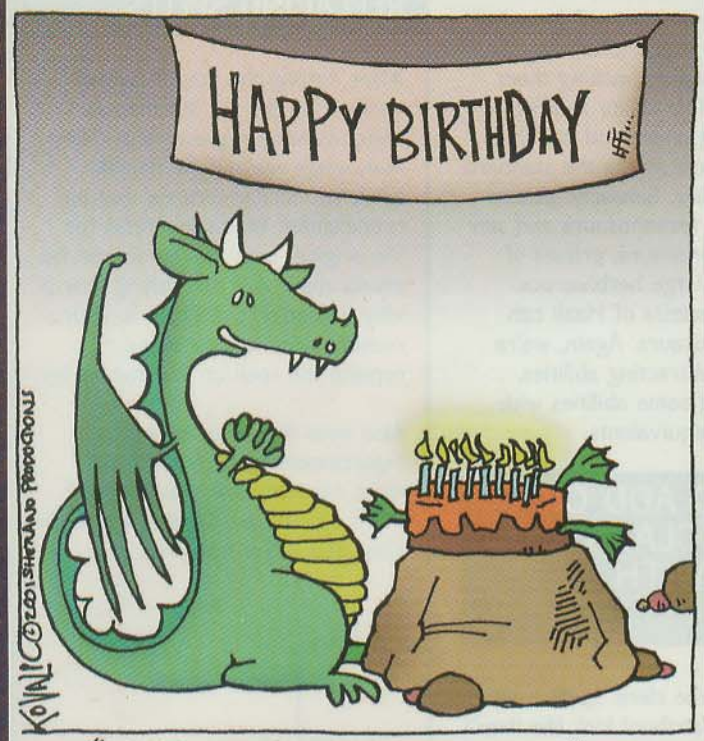
0-level	*Daze*
	Ghost sound
1st level	*Mount* (summons appropriate riding dinosaur)
2nd level	*Detect thoughts*
3rd level	*Invisibility sphere* (Sun domain)
4th level	*Arcane eye* (represents the ability to see through the eyes of distant dinosaurs)
	Charm monster (works only on dinosaurs)
	Locate creature
5th level	*Nightmare*
	Prying eyes (again, represents the ability to see through the eyes of distant dinosaurs)
	Seeming
6th level	*Circle of death* (Death and Evil domains)
	Eyebite
	Guards and wards
	Move earth
8th level	*Trap the soul* (Death domain)
9th level	*Dominate monster* (dinosaurs only)

Dragon Mirth

Got a good one?
Send it in!

"Dragonmirth"
c/o *Dragon Magazine*
1801 Lind Ave. S.W.
Renton, WA 98055

THE UNSPEAKABLE OAF by John Kovalic

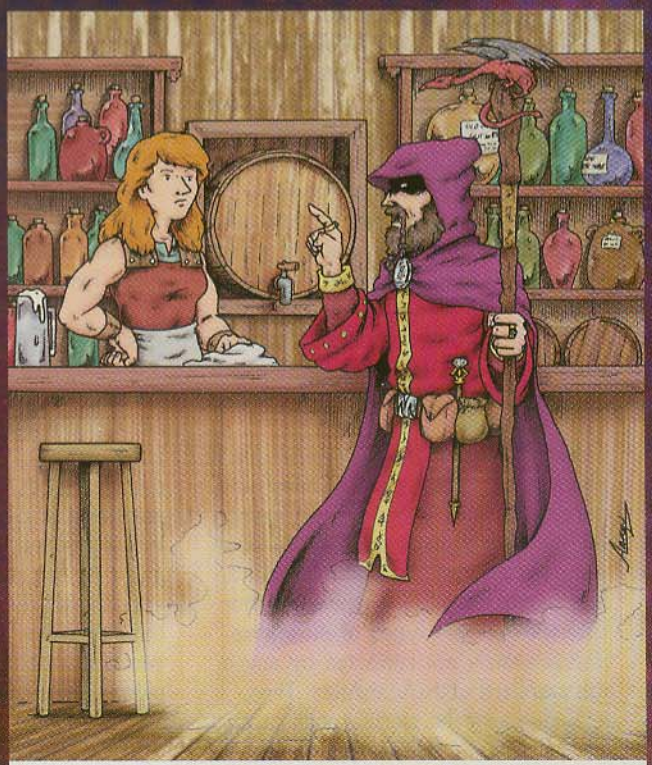


"MY FAVORITE: SEADEVILS FOOD CAKE!"

PVP By Scott Kurtz

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?
WE ORDERED SOME NACHOS FOR SNACKS WHILE PLAYING D&D. COLE AND FRANCIS ENDED UP GETTING INTO A JALAPENO EATING CONTEST.
GLUG! GLUG!
FRANCIS, HOW MANY DID YOU EAT?
EEE-HA, EEE-HA, EEEE-HA FIFTEEN.
HOW MANY DID COLE EAT?
SIXTEEN.
SO HE WON.
THAT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT.
WE NEED A GALLON OF MYLANTA AND A FIRE EXTINGUISHER IN THE MEN'S ROOM.

WWW.PVPONLINE.COM ©2001 SCOTT R. KURTZ



"POUR ME SOMETHING MYSTICAL AND ARCANE."

AARON WILLIAMS

Live the Adventure™

HârnPE

Complete Tabletop Adventure Modules:

- module booklets
- 6 pre-generated 3D character profiles
- 16 mini characters with stands
- full colour maps
- supplemental CD-ROM for PC users
  - real-time 3D scenes
  - ambient sounds
  - reference database
  - printable colour game aids

The acclaimed roleplaying fantasy world of Columbia Games Inc. and N. Robin Crossby is now DIGITALLY ENHANCED

d20 system

HârnMaster

WHAT'S NEW
WITH PHIL AND DIXIE

'ANNIVERSARY', FROM THE WORDS 'ANNUM', MEANING 'A YEAR', AND 'VERSARY', MEANING 'SOMETHING YOU CAN PUT IN A GREETING CARD'. A TERM APPLIED TO A DAY ON WHICH SOME EVENT IS ANNUALLY CELEBRATED OR COMMEMORATED.

IT'S **USUALLY** ASSOCIATED WITH 'WEDDING ANNIVERSARY', A PHRASE RARELY CONNECTED TO GAMING, EXCEPT WHEN USED WITH "THAT WAS **TODAY**?", OR "THE PLAINTIFF SUES FOR DIVORCE ON THE GROUNDS OF-":

YOU NEVER THINK OF CHARACTERS AS BEING MARRIED. ADVENTURING IS A DANGEROUS FAR-RANGING OCCUPATION. NOT SOMETHING 'MARRIED PEOPLE' **DO**.

A QUEST TO RESCUE THE LOST SWIMSUIT MODELS OF MOLIBAR? AW MAN, I **CAN'T**. I GOTTA TAKE MY KIDS TO JOUSTING PRACTICE.

GAMERS DON'T OFTEN PLAY MARRIED CHARACTERS. THEY WANT THE FREEDOM A NEW PERSONA CAN REPRESENT.

RIGHT **ON**, DUDE! IF I ROLL A DOUBLE 20 ON THE 'LUSTY BARMAID TABLE', I WANT TO ENJOY IT **GUILT FREE!**

WELL PUT, YOUR HOLINESS.

© P. Foglio '01

BUT THERE **ARE** BENEFITS TO PLAYING A MARRIED CHARACTER. A 'STAY AT HOME' MATE GIVES YOU A STABLE BASE OF OPERATIONS.

SO - HOW'S OUR FORMER EVIL WIZARD TAKING TO MARRIED LIFE?

GREAT! HE TURNED THE TAXMAN INTO A WYVERN AND THE WHOLE VILLAGE IS SO TERRORIZED, WE CAN BUY EVERYTHING ON CREDIT!

THEY CAN ALSO SERVE AS A HOOK FOR FUTURE ADVENTURES...

I DON'T **BELIEVE** IT! HE HAD ENOUGH TIME TO TURN THE NEIGHBORS INTO PANGOLINS, TRANSFORM THE TOWN INTO A FORTRESS OF DEATH, RAISE AN ARMY OF UNDEAD FRENCH MAIDS- AND HE **STILL** COULDN'T MOW THE LAWN?!

cervelle...

SAL? CAN WE STEP BACK AND LOOK AT THE **BIG** PICTURE?

cervelle...

OR, EVEN BETTER, TAKE THEM **WITH** YOU.

HA! THE SKELETON BRIGADE IS DEAD AGAIN! THE CAVERN OF THE SQUEALING MIST IS SEALED! THE VERIDIAN LICH IS TRAPPED IN THE JELLO OF ETERNITY! THE DARK KINGDOM OF SMAZZ IS **OURS**!

WELL... **YOURS** ACTUALLY, HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SWEETIE.

YOU REMEMBERED!

SMEK!

END!

URRR

www.studiofoglio.com

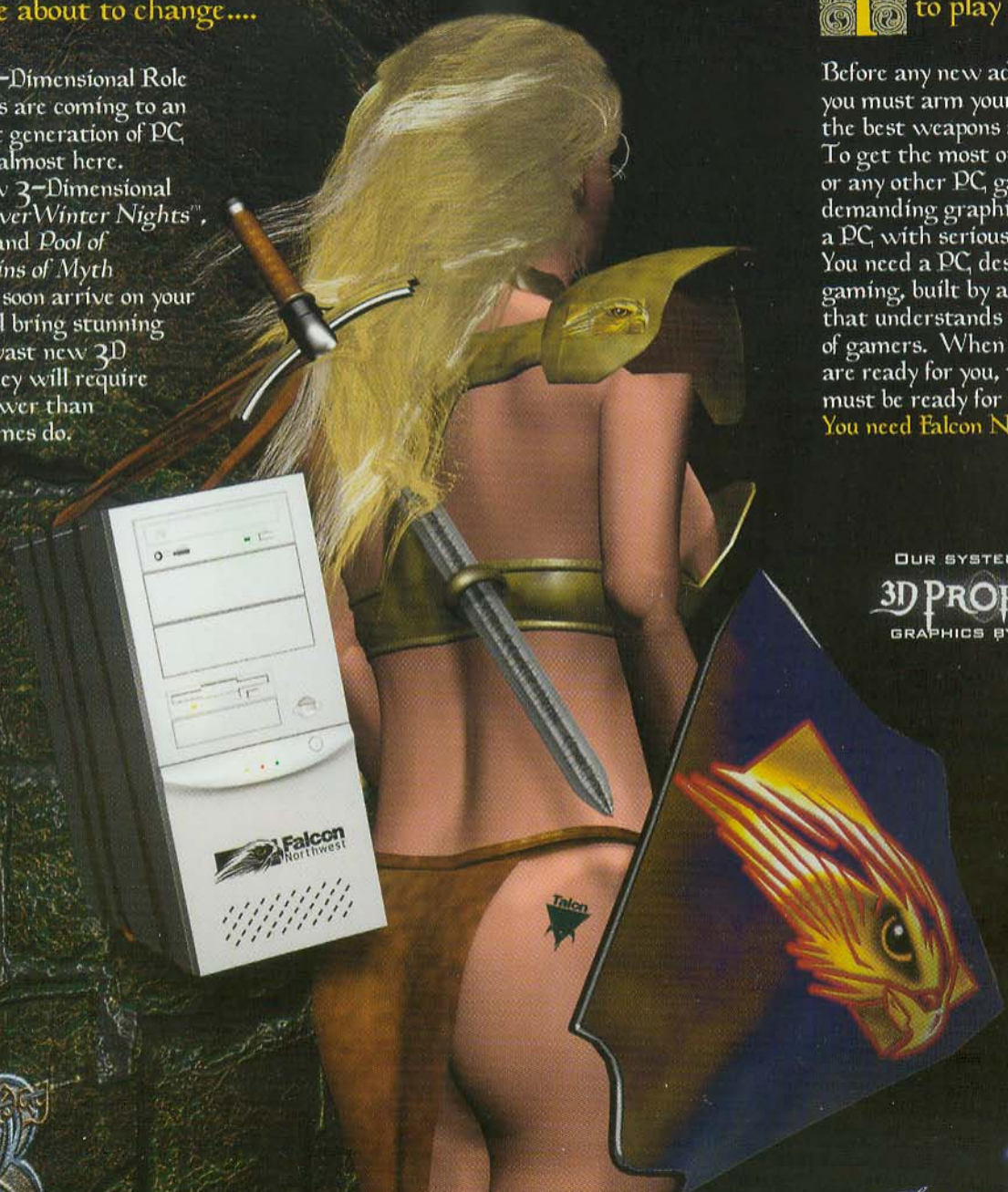
RPG PC

Adventurers, your worlds are about to change....

The days of 2-Dimensional Role Playing Games are coming to an end. The next generation of PC adventures is almost here. Incredible new 3-Dimensional RPGs like *NeverWinter Nights*™, *Wizardry 8*™ and *Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor*™ will soon arrive on your PC. They will bring stunning graphics and vast new 3D worlds, but they will require much more power than today's 2D games do.

Is your PC ready to play in them?

Before any new adventure you must arm yourself with the best weapons available. To get the most out of these or any other PC games with demanding graphics you need a PC with serious firepower. You need a PC designed for gaming, built by a company that understands the needs of gamers. When the games are ready for you, your PC must be ready for them. You need Falcon Northwest.



OUR SYSTEMS FEATURE
3D PROPHET III
GRAPHICS BY HERCULES

Wizardry 8

NeverWinter Nights

Pool of Radiance
Ruins of Myth Drannor

CALL:
1-888-FALCON-1
OR VISIT
WWW.FALCON-NW.COM

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS, Aurora and the Aurora engine are trademarks and the dragon and sword logo are registered trademarks owned by Infogrames, Inc. and its licensors. Wizardry 8 and the Wizardry 8 logo are trademarks of Sirtech Canada Ltd. Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor, the Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor logo, Dungeons & Dragons, the D&D logo, Forgotten Realms and the Forgotten Realms logo are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. and are used by Infogrames, Inc. under exclusive license. ©2001 TSR, Inc. ©2001 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Portions ©2001 Infogrames Entertainment, S.A. All rights reserved. Developed by BioWare Corp. All rights reserved. BioWare, the BioWare Infinity Engine and the BioWare Aurora Engine are trademarks of BioWare Corp. All rights reserved. Exclusively published by Infogrames, Inc. All rights reserved. Falcon Northwest, Mach V, Talon and 3D Prophet III are trademarks of Falcon Northwest Computer Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.

NOW THE MAGIC IS REAL.

EXPERIENCE THE ADVENTURE ON DVD VIDEO/ROM

- Widescreen version of the film.
- Two audio commentaries featuring director Courtney Soloman, cinematographer Doug Milsome, game co-creator David Arneson and actor Justin Whalin.
- Two original documentaries:
  - "*Let the Games Begin*" – a profile and history of adventure gaming.
  - "*The Making of Dungeons & Dragons*"
- Deleted scenes with optional director commentary.
- Multi-angle special effects deconstruction.
- DVD-ROM content includes a game demo of Interplay's *Baldur's Gate™ II: Shadows of Amn™* PC game and a printable *D&D®* Fastplay roleplaying game provided by Wizards of the Coast.

MONEY SAVING OFFERS
From Interplay And Wizards of the Coast in specially marked DVDs.

ALSO AVAILABLE TO RENT ON VHS.

WIN A TRIP TO PRAGUE!

GO ONLINE AT WWW.SEEDND.COM/CONTEST AND ENTER TO WIN EXCITING PRIZES INCLUDING A TRIP FOR FOUR TO PRAGUE PROVIDED BY:

NEW LINE CINEMA PRESENTS A SWEETPEA ENTERTAINMENT/SILVER PICTURES PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH BEHAVIOUR WORLDWIDE A COURTNEY SOLOMON FILM "DUNGEONS & DRAGONS" JUSTIN WHALIN MARLON WAYANS THORA BIRCH ZOE McLELLAN KRISTEN WILSON LEE ARENBERG WITH BRUCE PAYNE AND JEREMY IRONS BRYCE PERRIN CAROLINE ROSS DOUG MILSOME, B.S.C. JUSTIN CAINE BURNETT STATION X STUDIOS, LLC STEVE RICHARDS JOEL SILVER ALLAN ZEMAN NELSON LEONG TOPPER LILIEN & CARROLL CARTWRIGHT KIA JAM TOM HAMMEL COURTNEY SOLOMON www.newline.com www.seednd.com SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON VARESE SARABANDE PG-13

© 2000 New Line Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. © 2001 New Line Home Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved. "Platinum Series" is a licensed trademark of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.

NO PURCHASE IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. This Sweepstakes ends at 11:59 pm (Pacific Time) on 12/31/01. Open only to legal residents of the 50 United States & except residents of Florida and the District of Columbia, 13 years of age or older at the time of entry. This Sweepstakes is subject to the complete Official Rules available at www.seednd.com/contest or for a copy of the Official Rules and entry details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to *Dungeons and Dragons* "WIN A TRIP TO PRAGUE" -OFFICIAL RULES- P.O. Box 56136, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413. WA & VT residents may omit return postage on their request. The odds of winning a prize depend on the total number of eligible entries received. Travel restrictions apply. Void where prohibited.